CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND ITS PROBLEMS AS REFLECTED IN SELECTED WORKS OF GOLDEN AGE LITERATURE

Robin Carter

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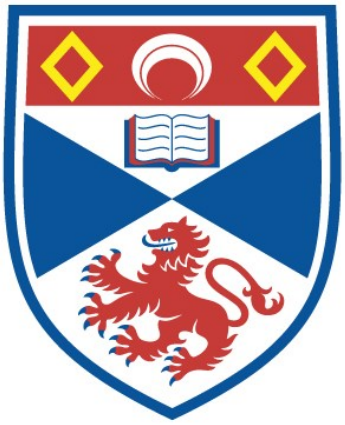

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OF

GOLDEN AGE LITERATURE

by

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I declare that this thesis has been composed by me on the basis of work done by me in St. Andrews, London, Madrid, and Pittsburgh, and that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a higher degree. I was admitted as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. under Ordinance No. LXXIX (St. Andrews No. 16) on June 19, 1964.

Robin Carter

I certify that the conditions of the Ordinance and Regulations relating to the Degree of Ph.D. have been fulfilled.

I. J. Woodward

TM 6080

Table of Contents

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Foreword

This thesis is divided into two sections: Part I sets out the traditional views on the fundamental nature of liberty as it is understood in Catholic doctrine, and examines a representative selection of Spanish commentators relevant to the Golden Age, including jurists, theologians and political scientists, to confirm their acceptance of traditional views; Part II examines the manner in which these views are reflected in five selected literary works, and explores the problems presented by the doctrine as they are apparent within these fictions. The selected literary works are Lope de Vega's Fuenteovejuna and El Mejor Alcalde, el Rey, Calderón de la Barca's El Alcalde de Zalamea and La Vida es Sueño, and Cervantes' La Ilustre Fregona (with corroborative evidence from Rinconete y Cortadillo).

The aim of the thesis is not to try to delineate or evaluate the views of Lope, Calderón and Cervantes vis à vis the fundamentals of the contemporary concept of liberty, nor have I found it necessary to thus indulge in what would be an almost pointless exercise. The aim is to discover what these artists can tell us of the difficulties created by the problems of liberty, and thereby to suggest the way in which

we ought to approach these problems if we are to understand liberty in the way it was conceived by Spaniards of that period. By the same token, I am not purporting to show that the literary works mentioned are primarily concerned with liberty, even though three of them are explicitly involved with the problem; I am only maintaining that, as part of the imitation of life which the works present, and while acknowledging that invented characters do not have effective liberty, we can see the problems that liberty poses for real men.

If asked to justify the choice of this topic for a doctoral thesis, i.e., as a contribution to the sum of human knowledge, I would submit that the meaning which the concept of liberty had in the mind of Golden Age Spaniards is not as well-known as it ought to be, considering the frequency with which it is mentioned in critical comments on the literature; some of my footnotes will attest to this.

In view of the above implication that the topic has relevance to a wide range of Golden Age writings, it may be asked why I have examined only five works in the light of my findings concerning the theory. One reason is that I am, as already indicated, more interested in suggesting the proper approach to the problem than in attempting a comprehensive survey of all the works or authors touching on the

problem. However, the main reasons are twofold, namely, the complexity of the subject, and the complexity of the works studied. While Part I illustrates the difficulties of simplifying the doctrine, Part II shows that its implications cannot easily be reduced to formulae and categories; the product of these two factors is the considerable amount of detailed investigation necessary in any attempt to understand the concept as it appears in such difficult works as those studied here. To try to produce a "synthesis" of the patterns (if any) to be seen in a large number of works would, obviously, only result in a mass of misleading information, of the like of which we have already seen too much,[1] while a detailed study of a large number of works - clearly desirable - would take many years and thousands of pages.

The reasons for choosing these particular works for detailed analysis are that two of them (El Mejor Alcalde, el Rey and El Alcalde de Zalamea) treat, among their main themes, problems of justice and law, i.e., problems basic to the notion of Christian liberty (see Part I), while the other three, (Fuenteovejuna, La Vida es Sueño and La Ilustre Fregona) have been previously recognised as being explicitly involved

[1] e.g., Everett W. Hesse's monumental travesty of Calderonian criticism, Calderón de la Barca, "Twayne's World Authors Series," No. 30, New York, 1967.

with the concept of liberty. This division is not meant to be categorical: the two themes mentioned, justice and liberty, overlap considerably (as they must) in all the works studied.

The reasons for choosing well-known works, about which much has already been said, are, in the first place, that their familiarity should enable the reader to appreciate the problems I am identifying more easily than would be possible if I were to adduce lesser-known works, whose interpretation might well be a thesis in itself even before the question of liberty could be discussed; and, in the second place, that these works are not yet, I submit, bowing beneath the weight of too much criticism - rather is there still much work that remains to be done on them.

While it has not been my aim, at any time, to write a thesis whose foundation is the re-interpretation of familiar works, I have nonetheless found it necessary to add my own interpretation to some aspects of the literature studied. Such added interpretations - a major effort in the case of El Mejor Alcalde, el Rey - have not arisen from any desire to force the literary texts into a mould formed by the theoretical background, nor from a desire for gratuitous innovation, but are the natural and inescapable results of lengthy and detailed examination of the works. It may be questioned

whether a thesis be the place to add new material to the interpretation of familar works; I can only submit that such additional interpretation is, perhaps, the sole witness to the usefulness of the original analysis undertaken. If the fresh study of a concept does not present, either directly or indirectly, a case for modifying to some degree our view of relevant works, then the study can scarcely have been worthwhile; my own case must stand or fall on the validity or invalidity of my findings concerning Fuenteovejuna, La Vida es Sueño and La Ilustre Fregona, but, in any event, a literary thesis ought, I would have thought, to add to the sum of literary knowledge.

It will be noticed that the Spanish writings I have studied for an insight into the theoretical background are taken from a period ranging from the first half of the sixteenth century (Francisco de Vitoria) to the middle of the seventeenth (Saavedra Fajardo and Andrés Mendo), while the literature analysed ranges only from Cervantes' Novelas Ejemplares to Calderón's El Alcalde de Zalamea - fifty years at most. The reason for including a wider temporal range of theorists is that I was concerned to demonstrate the consistency of the basic beliefs under discussion, as a background against which to set the examination of the artists' work.

PART I

THE CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY AND ITS INTERPRETATION IN SIXTEENTH- AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SPAIN

Introduction

Part I of this thesis outlines my frame of reference and presents the definitions on which my main lines of literary enquiry will, in Part II, be based. The limitations of the two chapters which follow need to be stated.

To begin with, I am not going to embark on a comprehensive philosophical survey of the concept of liberty from ancient to modern times, although I have explored some of the terrain in my reading. The subject is vast, and, anyway, it has already been done, notably by the Institute of Philosophical Research under the direction of Mortimer J. Adler.[1] Secondly, I am not going to attempt a historical survey of the concept in practice, a task for which I have no qualifications.

Chapter I presents a summary of the basic theory of liberty according to the Catholic doctrine relevant to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain. "Theory", almost by definition, implies controversy, and of course there was

[1] The Idea of Freedom, a Dialectical Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom, Mortimer J. Adler, Institute of Philosophical Research, (New York, 1958), (2 vols.). This book offers an excellent account of the problem, in my judgement. Its detachment is impressive, its definitions are entirely satisfactory and its explanations are thorough and profound. I am indebted to this work for several references to source materials which I might otherwise have missed.

controversy about liberty in contemporary Spain, as well as in other countries and at other times; however, it seems to me to be valid to talk about basic assumptions, since the controversies about free will and so on concern, not so much the existence and nature of liberty, but, rather, its mechanics and its relationships with other concepts, such as Grace, pre-destination, God's foreknowledge, astrology etcetera.[2] Thus, for example, the arguments in Spain at the end of the sixteenth century, when Molina and Suárez, among others, were disputing Báñez' development of the hypotheses of St. Thomas Aquinas, were concerned with how God moves the will, and not with the nature of the will's liberty or with the meaning of perfect (i.e., spiritual) liberty. Similarly, the issues concerning human liberty in the mediaeval controversies, as examined in great detail by Odon Lottin,[3] do not challenge the underlying tenets of the theory. It is

[2]For a brief survey of these controversies in mediaeval and Renaissance Spain, v. Otis H. Green, Spain and the Western Tradition, (Madison and Milwaukee, 1964), Vol. II, pp. 212-278; for a detailed study of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century arguments, v. Alberto Bonet, La Filosofía de la Libertad en las Controversias Teológicas del Siglo XVI y primera mitad del XVII, (Barcelona, 1932).

[3]Psychologie et Morale aux XII[e] et XIII[e] Siècles, D. Odon Lottin, (Gembloux, 1942), Tome 1, "Problèmes de Psychologie," pp. 11-389.

these basic beliefs, which do not change, that I shall attempt to describe in brief.

Chapter II adduces some examples from Spanish theorists - political writers, jurists, etc. - to demonstrate these beliefs at work in their examinations of the body politic, including a few historical examples to illustrate the difference between official theory and official and unofficial practice - the purpose of that being only to show that the difficulties involved in the practical application of the doctrine are not the inventions either of the artists studied in Part II, below, or of myself.

Chapter I

The basic concept of liberty according to Catholic Doctrine

The first point to make quite clear when discussing the basic assumptions is that it is quite useless to think of liberty in 17th century Spain in terms of liberty as we conceive it in what might loosely be called modern western democracies, where the concept is primarily concerned with political and social possibilities. For "us", liberty is - except in theological terms[1] - really an adjective, in that it is applied to various fields of human activity which we select as being essential to human happiness, and which in sum we call liberty; hence Benedetto Croce's statement that "liberty in the singular exists only in liberties in the plural."[2] The concept is, we might say, a basically secular concept, concerned with allowing men the opportunity for some

[1]The Roman Catholic conception of liberty, for instance, is still based on Thomist doctrine. V. Papal Encyclical, "De Libertate Humana," Leo XIII, dated June 20, 1888, in Acta Sanctae Sedis, Studio et cura Iosephi Pennachi et Victorii Pinzessi, Vol. XX, Lettera di Sua Santitá Papa Leone XIII, (Rome 1887), pp. 593-613; for an English translation by the Paulist Press, v. The Church Speaks to the Modern World, ed. E. Gilson, (Garden City, N.Y., 1945), pp. 55-85.

[2]History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century, (New York, 1933), pp. 12-13.

kind of self-realization in this life, and our institutions are, theoretically anyway, concerned with this kind of liberty rather than any other.[3] The First Amendment to the American constitution is a good example of this, with its affirmation of four basic freedoms of speech, press, religion, and assembly, and of course there are countless other contexts in which the idea of liberty may become involved - not always to a very sensible effect (e.g., the freedom of the motorist, of the ad-man, of the door-to-door salesman, and so on). It may seem obvious that the idea of liberty in 17th century Spain has very little in common with the modern approach, but I think it is worth stating, as confusion between the two occurs more often than one would expect, even amongst serious scholars.[4]

[3]This is probably a highly tendentious statement, since Sartre and Bergson, for example, see liberty as basically self-determination, while Freud and Tillich are examples of a concern with the Platonic idea of liberty as self-perfection in a moral sense. Nevertheless, Bentham, Hobbes, and Mill, among many others, are primarily concerned with liberty as self-realization, and it seems fair to say that our institutions have up to now owed more to the latter than to Sartre, Bergson, Freud and Tillich. (These analyses - but not the conclusion - are Adler's, op. cit.)

[4]V. extraordinary remarks such as Erich Fromm's: "What characterises mediaeval against modern society is the lack of individual freedom." "... mediaeval society did not deprive the individual of freedom, because the 'individual' did not yet exist." The Fear of Freedom, (London, 1942), pp. 34-5. Then of course there are - or were - the Hispanic scholars who tend to suggest that Lope & Co. were democrats, liberals, et. al.

The Catholic view of human liberty shared by Spanish theorists of the 16th and 17th centuries depends on an entirely different basis: it is essentially a religious concept. This Catholic view is based on the Aristotelian conception of liberty as individual self-perfection, the mastery of the passions of the soul and of the body by the reason. However, while Aristotle thought that true liberty of this nature was possible in this life, later Catholic theologians thought otherwise, and their analysis of liberty depends on certain precepts which may briefly be described as follows.

The crucial distinction between man and animal is that man possesses reason. Beasts behave the way they do because their instincts demand it: they have no alternative. But man behaves the way he does because he chooses to, and his choice is a product of his reason and his will. Man's ultimate end is God, and man, by nature, desires the good, that is, he desires happiness; the supreme good and the supreme happiness are to be found in God, and only in God. The ability to choose the direction he will take towards happiness is what constitutes man's natural liberty: that is the freedom of the will. Even though man's reason ought to make the right choice possible, it is not always easy to recognise and pursue the true good, and man is offered the

help of Grace so that he may find his way; he also has the guidance of law - eternal, divine, natural, and human - to clarify the right mode of behaviour in particular circumstances: law is reason, and obedience to law constitutes the essence of liberty. This natural liberty - reason acting on the will and its choice - is the basic liberty, and from it derives the possibility of a higher liberty, the liberty of the spirit, which consists in the will's being so well-ordered that a man voluntarily chooses the greatest good - i.e. always follows the moral law - because he desires only virtue and is above the distractions of lesser goods. In this life, it is not possible to attain this higher liberty completely, but man can aspire and move toward it. Natural liberty and spiritual or moral liberty are, then, the only true aspects of freedom; political liberty, the participation in the government of the common weal by the citizen, is of lesser importance, should be subordinated to the higher liberty, and is not indispensable to the possession of true liberty. These premises require some amplification.

Aquinas defined choice as "judgement about what is to be done",[5] and as "a sort of decision about what has

[5]"Homo non dicitur esse liber suarum actionum, sed liber electionis, quae est judicium de agendis." De Veritate, Q. 24, Art. 1, Ans. 1, in Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici, ordinis praedicatorum, Opera Omnia, (New York, 1949),

previously been deliberated."[6] He also makes the point, basing his argument on Aristotle's definition, that "to choose is to desire something for the sake of obtaining something else; wherefore, properly speaking, it regards the means to the end."[7] Free choice is a power, which man has by virtue of his possession of reason and will.[8] Men desire

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Tomus IX, "Quaestiones Disputatae." English translation of this and all other quotations from De Veritate by Robert W. Schmidt, S.J., De Veritate, (Chicago, 1954). I lean quite heavily on Aquinas for my definitions and explanations, so I would like to make clear in advance, repeating the point made on page 3, that I am aware of the continuing controversies about certain aspects of the problem, particularly in Spain, and that many of Aquinas' conclusions were disputed by Spanish theologians (among others). However, said arguments were not concerned with the fundamental nature of liberty, and it is the latter concept that I am describing here; Aquinas' definitions seem adequate for this purpose, not because he was the generally-accepted authority on all such matters, but because his basic assumptions concerning the nature (as opposed to the mechanics) of liberty were shared by later theologians, jurists, political writers, etc.

[6] "Ipsa electio est quasi quaedam scientia de praeconsiliatis," De Veritate, Q. 24, Art. 1, Ans. 17.

[7] "Eligere autem est appetere aliquid propter alterum consequendum, unde proprie est eorum quae sunt ad finem," Summa Theologica, I, Q. 83, Art. 4, in S. Thomae de Aquino, ordinis praedicatorum, Summa Theologiae, Cura et Studio Instituti Studiorum Medievalium Ottaviensis, (Ottawa, 1941). English translation (of this and all other quotations from the Summa Theologica) taken from the translation of the work by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (London, 1938).

[8] "Liberum arbitrium est facultas voluntatis et rationis. Sed in homine invenitur ratio et voluntas. Ergo et liberum arbitrium." De Veritate, Q. 24, Art. 1, To the contrary 3, (and elsewhere).

that which is good, and the choices a man makes are made because he believes, at the time of making the choice, that the object of his desire, the object of his choice, will be good for him; cf. Aquinas: "Man wills happiness of necessity, nor can he will not to be happy, or to be unhappy."[9] In a man whose reason and will are properly ordered, the reason governs the will and is able to direct the will according to the dictates of reason, so that his choice is of a higher good, and not deceived by the lesser goods which passion or ignorance might suggest to him.

It is that power which constitutes man's free will, that is, his natural liberty. Although man may choose between the good and the bad, that does not mean that man is properly exercising his natural liberty when he chooses evil, for choice is concerned with <u>the means fitted for the end</u>. Man's end is God, men desire the good, and concerning that there is no choice, for choice is not concerned with ends, but with means.[10] Therefore, the means chosen for

[9]"...Ex necessitate beatitudinem homo vult, nec potest velle non esse beatus, aut miser." <u>Summa Theologica</u>, I-II, Q. 13, A. 6.

[10]"...Philosophus dicit, ...quod 'voluntas est finis, electio autem eorum quae sunt ad finem.' ...finis, in quantum est huiusmodi, non cadit sub electione." ibid., I-II, Q. 13, A. 3.

this end must, by definition, be good, and man properly exercises his natural liberty when he chooses the good. The choice of evil is not a function of liberty at all, but the denial, or at very least the misuse, of liberty, for the meaning of this liberty lies in man's privilege of doing as he ought - acting according to his nature - voluntarily, unlike non-rational creatures which are not competent to choose and do as they ought because their instinct forces them to do so.[11] Hence Aquinas: "And forasmuch as man is rational is it necessary that man have a free will."[12] Similarly, man's liberty also stems from the aforementioned end (God): he has an immortal soul, and thus is not chained to any particular good on earth, so that his will is free to choose that which partakes of the eternal perfect good.

Thus, man's natural liberty does not involve man's doing or choosing completely as he likes. Aristotle's condemnation of "doing as one wants" as a false definition of liberty[13] and Plato's contempt for the democratic

[11]"... proprie voluntatis est eligere; non autem appetitus sensitivi, qui solus est in brutis animalibus. Et propter hoc brutis animalibus electio non convenit." Ibid., I-II, Q. 13, A. 2.

[12]"Et pro tanto necesse est quod homo sit liberi arbitrii, ex hoc ipso quod rationalis est." Ibid., I, Q. 83, A. 1.

[13]V.e.g., Politics, Book V, Ch. 9, translated by T. A. Sinclair, (Penguin, 1962), p. 216.

character who "believes in liberty and equality" and "won't listen or open his doors to the truth",[14] are developed by Aquinas and other Christian writers for whom sin is a kind of coercion and a form of slavery. Choosing evil cannot be a function of liberty because man's liberty depends on his nature (the rational creature) and his end (God), and sin is contrary to the one and a turning away from the other. Sin, therefore, being something outside man's nature, and contrary to his end, is an external force on man as he ought to be. The man who chooses that which is evil is not following his true nature but is being driven by that within him - his malice - which would pervert that nature. "Hence," according to Aquinas, "it belongs to the perfection of its liberty for the free will to be able to choose between opposite things, keeping the order of the end in view; but it comes of the defect of liberty for it to choose anything by turning away from the order of the end; and this is to sin."[15] Liberty, then, is liberty to choose good - almost

[14] Republic, Book VIII, Section 7, translated by H. D. P. Lee, (Penguin, 1963), p. 334.

[15] "Unde quod liberum arbitrium diversa eligere possit servato ordine finis, hoc pertinet ad perfectionem libertatis eius; sed quod eligat aliquid divertendo ab ordine finis, quod est peccare, hoc pertinet ad defectum libertatis." Summa Theologica, I, Q. 62, Art. 8, Reply Obj. 3.

the adjectival sense of liberty mentioned in connection with modern liberty, except that liberty must have this predicate of "the good" to mean anything at all. To demonstrate that it makes no sense to talk of "freedom to sin," St. Augustine draws the analogy of a slave in bondage "who does with pleasure the will of his master:" he may want to do as he is commanded, but that does not make him any the less a slave, and the slavery of sin holds men similarly in bondage.[16] As a conclusive argument against liberty's including the freedom to sin, man's liberty cannot be greater than God's, and God cannot sin, so the choice of evil cannot be a function of liberty; cf. Aquinas: "Among rational creatures only God has a free choice naturally impeccable and confirmed in

[16]"Liberaliter enim servit, qui sui domini voluntatem libenter facit. Ac per hoc peccandum liber est, qui peccati servus est. Unde ad juste faciendum liber non erit, nisi a peccato liberatus esse justitiae coeperit servus. Ipsa est vera libertas propter recti facti laetitiam; ... quomodo quisquam de libero arbitrio in bono gloriatur opere, qui nondum est liber ad operandum bene ...?" Enchiridion, Cap. XXX, in Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina, ed. J-P. Migne, (Paris, 1887), Vol. XL, p. 247. English translation by J. F. Shaw, in Basic Writings of St. Augustine, ed. Whitney J. Oates, (New York, 1948). I am aware of the possible dangers of using Augustine as an authority, inherent in his particular historical context and his later retractions, but the Enchiridion, written only nine years before his death, is described by Whitney J. Oates as "the most complete short statement of Augustinian Christianity" (op. cit., Introduction, p. xxxviii).

Good,"[17] and "There is a greater liberty of will in the angels, who cannot sin, than there is in ourselves, who can sin."[18]

That brings us to the ultimate goal and consequence of the proper use of natural liberty, which is spiritual liberty, sometimes termed moral liberty. Spiritual liberty is the condition of the will which invariably chooses that which is, or which pertains to, the greatest good; it is the condition of voluntarily applying the precepts of the moral law to one's own choice and action, not because of the restraint of law, nor for fear of the sanctions of law, but because of a complete desire for virtue. Absolute spiritual liberty is the absolute inability to choose evil, the condition of making the moral law one's own law, of virtue as a habit in all things. Aquinas puts it like this: "Since man, by his natural reason, is inclined to justice, while sin is contrary to natural reason, it follows that freedom from sin is true freedom which is united to the servitude of justice,

[17] "Inter naturas rationales solus Deus habet liberum arbitrium naturaliter impeccabile et confirmatum in bono". De Veritate, Q. 24, A. 7, Reply.

[18] "... maior libertas arbitrii est in angelis, qui peccare non possunt, quam in nobis, qui peccare possumus." Summa Theologica, I, Q. 62, A. 8, Reply Obj. 3.

since they both incline man to that which is becoming to him."[19] The crux of this whole concept is that virtue must be a willing morality;[20] mere obedience to law is not enough for moral liberty, which consists in a will so well-ordered that to sin is inconceivable.

Such true freedom cannot be completely attained in this life, for one reason, because man is flesh as well as spirit, and the flesh always bears the possibility of sin; for another reason, because "Complete freedom transcends conflict, power, and temporal process, for, in the peace of the soul at rest in union with God, freedom is identical with perfection achieved and is no longer the power to achieve

[19] "Veruntamen, quia homo secundum naturalem rationem ad iustitiam inclinatur, peccatum autem est contra naturalem rationem, consequens est quod libertas a peccato sit vera libertas, quae coniungitur servituti iustitiae, quia per utrumque tendit homo in id quod est conveniens sibi." Summa Theologica, II-II, Q. 183, A. 4.

[20] Summa Contra Gentiles, IV, 22, in Opera Omnia, Tomus V, English translation (of this and all other quotations from Summa Contra Gentiles) taken from the translation of the work by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (London, 1938). The cited chapter, which explains the concept at length, makes the analogy with friendship ("Similiter autem et amicitiae proprium est consentire amico in his quae vult"), maintaining that "Spiritus autem Sanctus sic nos ad agendum inclinat ut nos voluntarie agere faciat, inquantum nos amatores Dei constituit," and concluding that "Cum igitur Spiritus Sanctus per amorem voluntatem inclinet in verum bonum, in quod naturaliter ordinatur, tollit et servitutem qua (homo) servus passionis et peccati effectus, contra ordinem voluntatem agit, et servitutem qua contra motum suae voluntatis secundum legem agit, quasi legis servus, non amicus."

it," as Adler describes it,[21] and the infinite liberty of union with God is obviously not a condition we can experience on earth for very long. We can, however, move towards it, and the more virtuous our habits are, the closer we come to true moral liberty; but its distance from us is stated clearly by Aquinas:

> To have the judgement of reason unobstructable surpasses the state of this life for two reasons; primarily and principally because it is impossible for reason in this life here below to be always in the act of correct contemplation so that the reason for everything we do is God; secondly, because the lower powers do not happen to be so subject to reason in this life that the act of reason is in no wise obstructed by them, except in the case of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who was at the same time on the way to God and in possession of Him.
>
> By the Grace proper to this life, however, a man can be so attached to good that he cannot sin except with great difficulty because his lower powers are held in check by the infused virtues, his will is more firmly inclined to God, and his reason is made perfect in the contemplation of the divine truth with a continuousness that comes from the fervour of love and withdraws the man from sin."[22]

[21] The Idea of Freedom, Vol. 1, p. 280.

[22] "Tamen non posse intercipi judicium rationis, excedit statum viae, propter duo. Primo et principaliter, quia rationem esse semper in actu rectae contemplationis in statu viae, ita quod omnium operum ratio sit Deus, est impossibile. Secundo, quia in statu viae non contingit inferiores vires ita rationi esse subditas, ut actus rationis nullatenus propter eas impediatur, nisi in Domino Jesu Christo, qui simul viator et comprehensor fuit. Sed tamen per gratiam viae ita potest homo bono astringi quod non nisi valde de

Human liberty thus consists in man's reason and end, in his power to choose the highest good. Unfortunately, man's greatest problem is to know what is the right judgement, what is the right choice, how to distinguish the real from the apparent good in particular circumstances. Man is able to choose the good which is proportioned to human nature - i.e., mundane things such as where to build a house, when to take an umbrella, and so on - but, to distinguish and choose the good which is <u>above</u> human nature, man needs, and receives, the assistance of Grace; without Grace, "free choice is incapable of the kind of good which is above human nature."[23] The complete reconciliation of Grace with free will is a mystery, and a discussion of the arguments is unnecessary here. For the purposes of this examination, suffice it to say that the gift of Grace does not remove all obstacles to man's grasp of the true good: it merely helps him to try to overcome them. However, there is a less mysterious (in the

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difficili peccare possit, per hoc quod ex virtutibus infusis inferiores vires refrenantur, et voluntas in Deum fortius inclinatur, et ratio perficitur in contemplatione veritatis divinae, cujus continuatio ex fervore amoris proveniens hominem retrahit a peccato." <u>De Veritate</u>, Q. 24, A. 9, Reply.

[23] "Ad hoc ergo bonum quod est super naturam humanam, constat liberum arbitrium non posse sine gratia:" Aquinas, <u>De Veritate</u>, Q. 24, Art. 14, Reply. This is one of the problems mentioned earlier (p. 3) about which arguments have raged, and in which Aquinas' conclusions have been attacked as much as those of other thinkers.

theological sense), more easily identifiable aid to man's liberty, and that aid is the guidance of law.

One of the important conclusions of Adler's intensive study of liberty is the following:

> In the chapters dealing with the different forms taken by certain of the freedoms we have identified, we have found that law - positive law, moral law, physical law - is a pivotal term in the discussion. ... The fact that law is intimately connected with liberty becomes intelligible in the light of our generic understanding of freedom. If some tension between self and other is involved in any conception of freedom, then law plays one role when it represents a power alien to the self, and another when the self is able to make the law somehow its own or an expression of its power. In the first role, law is an obstacle to freedom; in the second, it is a source of freedom, or even part of its substance.[24]

As Adler duly goes on to note, these statements beg some questions, so that, for example, "the relation of law to liberty is differently conceived according as the type of law in question is thought to be purely an expression of reason, purely an arbitrary or wilful imposition, or a mixture of the rational and the arbitrary,"[25] and so on. But the quotation as it stands serves the purpose of this essay by emphasising the fundamental importance of law in relation to most conceptions of human liberty; without law, human

[24] The Idea of Freedom, Vol. 1, p. 617.

[25] The Idea of Freedom, Vol. 1, p. 618.

liberty - whether individual or collective - becomes merely license or anarchy; and the "second role" Adler refers to is the one which is directly relevant to the Catholic liberty I am describing here, in which the relationship between law and liberty requires close examination.

As is well known, the foundations of the mediaeval world-picture are set in the force of law, law which among Spanish jurists is divided into the four Thomist divisions of eternal law, divine law, natural law, and human law. The theoretical aim of the jurists and theologians is to deduce and understand the correspondences between these various levels of law, and thus to make sense of the function of human law, which is supposed to reflect and represent natural and divine law - and therefore eternal law - by guiding the political and individual order in the directions which natural and divine law would appear to dictate. Law, above all, is supposed to embody the precepts of reason, reason which separates man from the beasts and endows him with his natural liberty; justice, as Aquinas says,[26] is a

[26] "...virtus humana est quae bonum reddit actum humanum, et ipsum hominem bonum facit. Quod quidem convenit iustitiae. ...cum iustitia operationes humanas rectificet, manifestum est quod opus hominis bonum reddit." Summa Theologica, II-II, Q. 58, A.3.

virtue, which makes a man and his acts good. For most men, then, law is necessary to order the reason to guide the will in the direction of choosing the good. Law is a guide to man's actions in that it rewards good and punishes evil; man's reason, by observing divine and natural law, is able to discover right and wrong, and to create his own human law to direct human society towards the good. Natural law is the eternal law planted in rational creatures, inclining them to their right action and end as individuals, i.e., to their ultimate happiness, their perfection as human persons, and their fellowship with man and God, while human law, drawing on the principles of natural law, is supposed to do the same for societies, governing the well-being of the people and the community. Human law, therefore, to the extent to which it is concerned with right and wrong, thus depends on the higher powers, for men do not <u>decide</u> what is right and wrong, they deduce it, <u>via</u> reason, from natural law and divine law, which are the segments of eternal law revealed to man. Human law <u>should</u> thus be a reflection of, or rather, derived from, the principles of eternal law as far as they are known; ideally, then, human law should encourage good and deter evil. It is from that premise that the logical conclusion that human law - <u>just</u> human law - is

binding in conscience is drawn by Aquinas,[27] for one, and by Spanish jurists such as Suárez[28] and Vitoria.[29] Human law cannot, however, ban evil and command good overnight, and the attempt to do so would, as Aquinas observed,[30] cause more evil than it could hope to eradicate, for virtue is a habit, and is learned gradually, rather than enforced suddenly; human law only directs men in the path of virtue, without actually forcing saintliness upon them.

Given that true human liberty is the voluntary obedience to moral law, and supposing that human law does

[27] "...leges huiusmodi onera proportionabiliter inferentes iustae sunt, et obligant in foro conscientiae, et sunt leges legales." Ibid., I-II, Q. 96, A. 4.

[28] P. D. Francisco Suárez Granatensi, e Societate Iesu, Tractatus De Legibus ac Deo Legislatore in decem libros distributus, (Antwerp, 1613), v. Liber III, Caput XXI, "Utrum lex civilis possit subditos obligare in conscientiae foro," and Caput XXII, "Utrum omnis lex humana, seu civilis obliget in conscientia, aut possit esse vera lex sine tali obligatione."

[29] "Principum leges et constitutiones ita obligant, ut transgresores in foro conscientiae culpae rei sint." Relecciones Teológicas del Maestro Fray Francisco de Vitoria, Edición crítica, con facsimil de códices y ediciones príncipes, variantes, versión castellana, notas e introducción por el P. Maestro Fray Luis G. Alonso Getino, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1934), Tomo II, De Potestate Civili, para. 15, Tertia Conclusio, p. 195.

[30] "Dicendum quod lex humana intendit homines inducere ad virtutem, non subito, sed gradatim. Et ideo non statim multitudini imperfectorum imponit ea quae sunt iam virtuosorum, ut scilicet ab omnibus malis abstineant. Alioquin imperfecti huiusmodi praecepta ferre non valentes in deteriora mala prorumperunt ..." Summa Theologica, I-II, Q. 96, A. 2, Reply Obj. 2.

reflect the eternal law, it follows that man's natural liberty coincides with, and his moral liberty consists in, his obedience to human law. Law, we must bear in mind, is reason, and reason is the source of man's freedom because it allows him to choose the good; so human law makes the conclusions of human reason known to ordinary men, thereby guiding them toward the free choice of the good. Thus, as Leo XIII's encyclical puts it, "In man's free will ... lies the very root of the necessity of law";[31] man is free when he acts according to the dictates of reason, and reason enshrined in law helps him to do so. The nature of human liberty thus involves obedience to the eternal law, the law of God, which commands good and forbids evil; this authority of God protects and perfects human liberty, the supreme end of which is God himself: man's subjection to God is no denial of liberty, because man is by nature subject to God, and the free choice of the good is necessarily a function of that relationship. Man's highest duty, then, is to respect authority and submit to just law, for the just law is, by

[31] "Iamvero haec ordinatio rationis lex nominatur. Quamobrem cur homini lex necessaria sit, in ipso eius libero arbitrio, scilicet in hoc, nostrae ut voluntates a recta rationis ne discrepent, prima est caussa, tamquam in radice, quaerenda." "De Libertate Humana," para. 6. Acta Sanctae Sedis, Vol. XX, p. 597, English translation from The Church Speaks to the Modern World, p. 61.

definition, in accord with the Christian moral law of the Gospel, which brings man nearer God and therefore makes him more free; obedience to just law by the members of the community should also effect their protection from evil men.

The essential point, then, is that freedom must follow reason and the moral law. It is an individual responsibility, not a responsibility of the state. Except when the distinction between natural and moral liberty needs to be made, it is not liberty in the adjectival sense which always demands a predicate, for its predicate is implicit in its nature: liberty is the power to choose good, or the habit of choosing good. Liberty, after all, is the opposite of slavery, and the worst kind of slavery is sin, for it is slavery according to eternal and divine law, whereas other kinds of slavery are the ordinations of lesser forms of law.

Since, ideally, the delineation of political or social liberties is unimportant if the laws of the state are just, and since, ideally, man's possession of natural liberty and the possibility of his moral liberty are assured irrespective of the condition of human law (because the use of the one and the aspiration toward the other are the individual's own responsibilities), the idea of political or social liberty for its own sake (i.e. as part of the well-being of the members of the community) does not, among Spanish

theorists at least, assume great importance. Obviously, human law - if just - assists what we call liberty in the 20th century, just as our laws do when they protect liberties which we define in constitutions (written or unwritten), but although one could examine Spanish codes and deduce their equivalent of constitutional liberties, it would be anachronistic, misleading, and unhelpful, because Spanish theorists just did not think of liberties in that fashion. They did discuss liberty with regard to certain fields of political behaviour, as I hope to show in due course, but at this juncture it is more useful merely to clarify the theoretical context within which political liberty was discussed.

Aquinas' idea of political liberty followed Aristotle's: political liberty entails the participation by citizens in their own government, that is, their having a share in the making of their own laws.[32] Aristotle had said that this liberty was confined to only certain members of the state, as a privilege of status, but while Aquinas does not state clearly where he stands with regard to

[32] "Si enim sit libera multitudo, quae possit sibi legem facere, plus est consensus totius multitudinis ad aliquid observandum quod consuetudo manifestat, quam auctoritas principis, qui non habet potestatem condendi legem, nisi inquantum gerit personam multitudinis." Summa Theologica, I-II, Q. 97, A. 3, Reply 3.

eligibility, many Spanish theorists - Suárez, for instance - do not even discuss that kind of liberty in the first place - not, that is, in terms of political liberty. The importance of political liberty is limited, because men can be free without it if they obey the law willingly. Laws should represent the will of the people (although it is not clear which people are thus represented), and the people may change laws, but even if these conditions do not apply, men may still be free, no matter how absolute their ruler.

Nevertheless, although true liberty does not depend on the political or legal structure for its existence, since these circumstances neither affirm nor prevent human liberty, the circumstances can assist men in the use of liberty by allowing action. Moral liberty is possible within a tyranny, but external circumstances can certainly help men to exercise their natural liberty and aspire toward moral liberty. Human law is mainly concerned with the common good, and the more areas there are of private decision, the greater opportunity man has to exercise his natural liberty.[33] However, this freedom of action must still be

[33] cf. ibid., Supplement, Q. 47, A. 6, which affirms a man's freedom to choose his own wife, for example.

subordinate to the moral law: men's private acts must still be for the good. The point is, though, that man's real freedom lies in his choice rather than in his action: he may will a thing but be prevented, and he may not will a thing which he is forced to prosecute; either way, if his choice is directed towards the good, his natural and moral liberty are not threatened.[34]

In sum, freedom must mean compliance with moral law, i.e. reason, and it is not the right to choose evil. Human law should embody the moral law, and the man who, with the help of Grace, voluntarily behaves according to human just law, is the man who is free. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," (2 Cor. 3:17), and only bad men feel that good laws are coercion.[35] Natural liberty is in

[34] "Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod in opere hominis duo est invenire: scilicet electionem operum, et haec semper in hominis potestate consistit; et operum gestionem sive executionem, et haec non semper in potestate hominis potestate est; sed divina providentia gubernante, propositum hominis ad finem quandoque perducitur, quandoque vero non. Et ideo homo non dicitur esse liber suarum actionum, sed liber electionis, quae est judicium de agendis. Et hoc ipsum nomen liberi arbitrii demonstrat." De Veritate, Q. 24, A. 1, Ans. 1.

[35] "... homines virtuosi et iusti non subduntur legi, sed soli mali." Summa Theologica, I-II, Q. 96, A.5; "Serviliter autem [homo] agit si, tali voluntate manente, propter timorem legis in contrarium positae abstinet ab eo quod vult." Summa Contra Gentiles, IV-22.

the choice, the possibility of which derives from the intellect and the gift of reason - that is free will; spiritual or moral liberty is the habit of using that free will to direct the self toward the good in all things, but is incomplete in this life because man is a creature of the flesh as well as the spirit - the ultimate liberty is union with God, sharing, becoming identical with, God's law, love, and liberty. Political liberty, consisting in the participation by certain citizens in the process of making just laws, is of lesser moment, and a man may be free even while possessing no political liberty at all.

All this is relatively straightforward in theory, but there are many complications in practice, as the theorists know. Perhaps the most serious difficulty of all lies in the imperfections of man's faculties and powers. Free choice is a combination of reason and will: but human reason may easily be deceived, and the will may make a wrong choice - the whole problem of human knowledge and understanding, and the necessity of prudence, is involved. Law, as has been said, is supposedly the application of reason to human circumstances, and liberty is therefore meant to be consistent with obedience to human law; but, as Aquinas points out, much depends on the state of the law, and a human law is a just law only when it is directed towards the common

good, and meets certain other requirements. What to do about an unjust law? Aquinas says an unjust law is contrary to God's law and should be disobeyed,[36] but who decides whether or not a law is unjust? When should it be disobeyed? How? The complex and voluminous writings of Spanish jurists bear witness to the endless difficulties involved in the interpretation of eternal, divine, and natural law, and in the devising of human laws to reflect these interpretations; but in addition, there are endless difficulties involved in the contingent application of all kinds of law - from eternal to human - in real-life situations. Language itself is a bar to the desired harmony, as the efforts of Spanish jurists to arrive at some kind of linguistic precision demonstrate;[37] and so on. It is these difficulties which are seen to arise in literature, when artists force us to see the limitations of our intellectual constructs, as I want to show later. But before that, some examples of Spanish versions of the doctrine are in order.

[36] "... leges possunt esse iniustae per contrarietatem ad bonum divinum, ... et tales leges nullo modo licet observare." Summa Theologica, I-II, Q. 96, A. 4.

[37] e.g., Suárez, De Legibus, Liber III, Cap. XV; Liber III, Cap. XXVI; Liber V, Cap. VI; Liber VI, Cap. I; et al.

Chapter II

The Doctrine as it appears in Spanish theory of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries

An oft-repeated definition of liberty amongst Spanish jurists and political writers is that supplied by the Corpus Juris Civilis Romanis: "Libertas est naturalis facultas eius, quod cuique facere libet, nisi si quod vi, aut jure prohibetur."[1] Alfonso el Sabio's Siete Partidas translates this as: "Libertad es poderio que ha todo ome naturalmente de fazer lo que quisiere, solo que fuerça, o derecho de ley, o de fuero, non gelo embargue."[2] The liberty referred to here is the liberty of non-slavery in terms of civil law - in the introductory paragraph of the título, under the heading "De la libertad," it is explained that "Onde pues que el titulo ante deste, fablamos de la servidumbre, queremos aqui dezir, de la libertad. E mostrar que cosa es, e quien la puede dar, e a quien, ... [etc.]" But by the sixteenth century there are extensions to that definition. For example,

[1] Digestorum, Bk. 1, Tit. 5, para. 4.

[2] Las Siete Partidas del sabio Rey don Alonso, (Salamanca, 1576), Partida IV, título 22, ley 1^{a}.

Vázquez de Menchaca bases his discussion on liberty on the definition from the Digestorum, which he quotes;[3] but, just as there are other kinds of law apart from civil law, so there are other kinds of slavery apart from civil slavery, and, as Menchaca states elsewhere, man was created free by nature, but can be enslaved in four different ways, viz., a) by ius divinum, "quasi supernaturaliter homines servi poenae efficiuntur per peccatum;"[4] b) by ius naturale, "Sic ipsorum hominum quidam hebetiores quasi natura serviunt prudentioribus a quibus reguntur" - the Aristotelian basis of natural slavery;[5] c) by ius gentium, as a prisoner of war,[6] and d) by ius civile - a free man may sell himself into slavery.[7] Obviously, the most important of these

[3] D. Fernando Vázquez de Menchaca, Controversias Fundamentales, (first published 1564), Latin text with Castilian translation by Fidel Rodríguez Alcalde, 4 vols., (Valladolid, 1931), Liber 1, Cap. XVII, para 4.

[4] ibid., Cap. IX, para. 2.

[5] ibid., Cap. IX, para. 3. In ibid., Cap. X, para. 12, Menchaca says of this theory of natural slavery: "Sed veritas (mihi credite) mera est istorum doctrinam meram esse tyrannidem boni consilii & amicitiae tegmine intrusam in certam humani generis internetionem ac miseriam, ...(etc.)," and observes that Aquinas inclined towards this Aristotelian doctrine.

[6] ibid., Cap. IX, paras. 4-9.

[7] ibid., Cap. IX, paras. 10-13.

classifications are the first two, which concern the lack of the natural and moral liberty previously described, and other Spanish writers, logically, discuss the problem in the same terms.

The important aspect of the Roman-based definition is the exceptions stated: "nisi si quid vi, aut jure, prohibetur." How can force be reconciled with liberty? Menchaca explains: "si dum donare aut vendere rem meam vellem princeps tyrannus prohibuit non ideo minus eius dominium dicor habere;"[8] on the higher levels of liberty, that is the same principle as the Thomist assertion that, even if a man wills to do right but is prevented, or wills not to do wrong but is forced to, his liberty is still intact, in his <u>choice</u>. The significance of the other condition, "aut jure," is obvious: true liberty consists in obedience to law - whether moral, natural, or human just law; it is Cicero's dictum "legem servi sumus ut liberi esse possimus" made applicable to all levels of existence. It is this servitude to justice which affirms the "good" predicated to man's free choice and aspirations to virtue, and it is implicit in the innumerable statements on liberty by Spanish theorists. Juan de Madariaga exemplifies the

[8] ibid., Cap. XVII, para. 6.

approach and the detail:

> Liber est, dize Aristóteles, qui est sui ipsuis causa..... vivir conforme nos lo dicta nuestra buena razón clara y despasionada, eso es vivir con libertad. Pues como las justas leyes sean conformes a la razón natural, o sobrenatural: y el hombre no pueda hazer cosa más conforme a su naturaleza racional, que regirse por razón; por esto, no sólo, no es servidumbre, sino libertad muy libre, vivir según las leyes que la buena razón humana o divina tiene establecidas.... De donde infiero, que son mucho más libres los que viven con las leyes de la Perfición Evangélica, que los que viven como quieren. [9]

To do as one likes, Madariaga concludes, is "vivir como bestia, y claro está que la bestia no es libre, aunque ella se lo piense."[10]

The basic conditions of human liberty are outlined in Madariaga's statement: our liberty consists in our reason, which tells us how to live as we ought according to our nature; we therefore are free when we live according to the laws which stem from divine and human reason, and <u>not</u> when we live according to our animal (i.e. irrational) desires. This principle of obedience to moral law, and to law which is moral, as the touchstone of liberty, is a principle that is reiterated by other theorists whenever they touch on the

[9] Fray Juan de Madariaga, <u>Del Senado y de su Príncipe</u>, (Valencia, 1617), Cap. 41, pp. 477-8.

[10] ibid., p. 478.

concept of liberty, as the following examples illustrate.

Castillo de Bovadilla, a legal expert, expresses the theme in several ways: "Según San Gerónimo, para con Dios aquélla sola es la libertad, no servir a los pecados;"[11] "ser súbditos del único y supremo Señor ... es suprema libertad;"[12] "Según Boecio, suma libertad es obedecer a la justicia."[13] Padre Rivadeneyra quotes the same passage from St. Jerome as Bovadilla quotes, to make the same point,[14] while Padre Juan de Torres entitles one chapter of his Philosophía Moral, "Quán preciosa sea la libertad, la qual pierden los hombres sujetándose a los vicios."[15] Furió Ceriol, discussing the freedom of the ruler to reward whom he please, defines the liberty of the ruler: "Otro dirá que el Príncipe es libre, i ha de dar los oficios a quien bien le paresciere; Respondo: que la libertad del Príncipe no

[11]Castillo de Bovadilla, Política Para Corregidores, (first published 1597), (Amberes, 1750), Libro I, Cap. 4, para. 33.

[12]Ibid., Libro II, Cap. 16, para. 12.

[13]Ibid., Libro III, Cap. 1, para. 2.

[14]Pedro de Rivadeneyra, Tratado de la Religión y virtudes que deve tener el Príncipe Christiano, (Madrid, 1595), Libro II, Cap. 7, p. 311.

[15]El Padre Juan de Torres, Philosophía Moral de Príncipes, para su buena crianca y govierno, (Burgos, 1596), Libro XVI, Cap. 1.

lo es, quando va fuera razón, porque entonces abuso i servidumbre se llama: entonces es libre, quando usa de buena razón, porque de otra manera es tirano."[16] Mártir Rizo is as clear as Madariaga: "Crió Dios al hombre con tan libre potestad sobre sus acciones, que obra de tal suerte, que puestos todos los requisitos para la ejecución, puede obrar y dejar de obrar ... esta potestad en el hombre se extiende sólo a una o a otra obra buena moral, que no exceda los límites del fin natural del hombre, y esto se prueba porque el entendimiento humano conoce lo que es honesto y decente y lo que se conforma con las leyes de la razón ..."[17] - reason is always greater than sin,[18] and "la virtud se prefiere a todas las cosas; con ella se guarda y se conserva la libertad, salud, vida, hacienda y patria."[19]

Saavedra Fajardo, while expressing the same principle, is one writer who also mentions one of the problems involved. Discussing the necessity for the Prince to inspire fear as well as love in his subjects, he points

[16] Fadrique Furió Ceriol, El Concejo y Consejeros del Príncipe, (first published 1559), ed. D. Sevilla Andrés, (Valencia, 1952), p. 171.

[17] Mártir Rizo, Norte de Príncipes, (first published 1626), ed. José Antonio Maravall, (Madrid, 1945), Cap. VIII, p. 44.

[18] Ibid., Cap. VIII, para. 4, p. 46.

[19] Ibid., Cap. XII, para. 3, p. 67.

out that "naturalmente se ama la libertad, y la parte de animal que está en el hombre es inobediente a la razón, y solamente se corrige con el temor."[20] It is, however, necessary that the Prince "mantenga dentro de los límites de la razón la potestad de su dignidad, el grado de la nobleza y la libertad del pueblo"[21] - men may fall for false liberties, and the Prince must dissuade them therefrom while at the same time protecting their true liberty. Ideally, men should not be coerced by fear, but Fajardo is a political writer trying to make theory and practice compatible.[22] The important aspect is the emphasis on reason, the basic premise of natural liberty, which Vázquez de Menchaca sums up as well as anyone: "Quod si dixeris, ergo tunc [i.e., on account of God's ability to change the order of things arbitrarily] non foret nobis liberum arbitrium, respondeo, quod non desineret fore liberum, nam

[20]Saavedra Fajardo, Idea de un Príncipe Político Christiano, (first published 1640), (Valencia, 1656), Empresa XXXVIII, para. 5.

[21]ibid., Empresa XLI, para. 7.

[22]Fajardo was one of many writers more concerned with political expediency than with absolute morality, and often has to defend a position which he knows is not strictly ethical. An excellent account of this is given by Monroe Z. Hafter, in Gracián and Perfection, (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), v. Chapters I-III in particular.

ideo homo ratione praeditus est, ut nativas inclinationes & appetitus valeat superare, & rationis vi frenare, subigere & calcitrare."[23] This was, in fact, one of the roots of the great sixteenth-century controversy concerning the American Indians: whether or not they should be legally enslaved depended, in part, on whether or not it could be proved that they were possessed of reason; of course, it also depended on whether one accepted the premise of natural slavery in the first place (cf. footnote 5, supra).

In the above statements, the ideas of both natural liberty (possession of reason) and moral liberty (withdrawal from sin) are stated. It should be noted that the perfection of God's freedom is also referred to in the course of certain disputes, by, for instance, Vázquez de Menchaca: "ipse [God] nihil mali facere potest, quia & si sit omnipotens, tamen malum facere posse, potencia non est: sed potius infirmitas non valentis abstinere a malo."[24] The problem Menchaca is analysing is "Dispensare an possit Deus cum praeceptis decalogi?" and similar arguments explored by, e.g., Suárez[25]

[23] Controversias Fundamentales, Liber 2, Cap. XXVII, para. 13.

[24] ibid., Cap. XXVII, para. 2.

[25] De Legibus, v.e.g., Liber II, Cap. VI: "An lex naturalis sit vere lex divina praeceptiva?" in particular paras. 10-15.

and Vitoria,[26] contain, implicitly or explicitly, the affirmation of God's inability to do evil, i.e., of his perfect liberty.

That men experience great difficulty in discovering the proper use of their liberty, and even in understanding the differences between true and false liberty, has already been suggested: the problem involves the whole context of man's search for prudence within a complex universe where he may easily deceive himself. Everybody wants liberty. We know it is desirable: it is the opposite of slavery, it suggests the absence of restraint, and, to the undiscriminating, it suggests, as Aristotle had observed, doing exactly as one likes. That much is self-evident, and were the situation otherwise we would not need civil laws. Fajardo recognises the difficulties when he writes: "Es la malicia como la luz, que por cualquier resquicio penetra, y es tal nuestra inclinación a la libertad, y tan ciega nuestra ambición, que no ay pretexto que mire a una dellas, a quien no demos crédito, dexándonos engañar dél."[27] He

[26] De Homicidio, para. 4: "Deus an naturas rerum immutare potuerit, vel ab initio alias facere, quam nunc sunt," and para. 5: "Deus quod naturas rerum mutare non possit ab authore probari videtur," Relecciones, Tomo III, p. 25.

[27] Idea de un Príncipe Político Christiano, Empresa LXXVIII, para. 1.

proceeds to describe the way in which some people use this human weakness as a means to their own ends: "Afectan la libertad por ganar el aplauso del pueblo, contra el Magistrado, y perturbar la República, reduciéndola después a la servidumbre.... Buela el pueblo ciegamente al reclamo de libertad, y no la conoce hasta que la ha perdido, y se halla en las redes de la servidumbre," and he cites the Prince of Orange and the Low Countries as an example.[28] The Aragonese disturbances arising out of the flight and imprisonment of Antonio Pérez, Secretary to Philip II, serve as an example of the same kind of thing closer to home (v. Appendix I).

As is obvious, then, men are inclined to pursue what Tacitus called "licentia quam stulti libertatem vocant," and to say that that is obvious is to say that it is a real and, within the Spanish-Catholic context, universal problem; it is, as has been said, the root of the necessity of law. That, and other human weaknesses, are recognised by most political and moralist writers, although they hold differing views about which safeguards were most useful; some, like Quevedo in Política de Dios y gobierno de Cristo,

[28] ibid., para. 5.

demand adherence to virtue, while others are more concerned with the political than with the moral value of an action.[29] For those who took this latter attitude to relative extremes, particularly the commentators on Tacitus, "questions of good or bad were not relevant; the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of its [political science's] principles was of chief concern."[30]

The guidance of law is supposed to help counter the particular human deficiencies concerned with liberty, but, as indicated in the preceding chapter, it also introduces further problems. The sine qua nihil relevance of law is made clear by most writers - Rizo expresses it in exemplary fashion: "La monarquía real y legítima es aquélla donde los súbditos obedecen las leyes del monarca, y el monarca las leyes naturales, dejando a los súbditos la libertad natural y la propiedad de sus bienes."[31] In this ideal situation, wherein human law accurately interprets and applies natural law, man's liberty is indeed assured via obedience to human law, and it is thus logical to accept Aquinas' conclusion that just law is binding in conscience. Hence Suárez: "Dicendum vero est, legem humanam

[29] V. Hafter, Gracián and Perfection, p. 7.

[30] Hafter, ibid., p. 12.

[31] Norte de Príncipes, Ch. II, para. 2, p. 22.

civilem habere vim, & efficaciam obligandi in conscientia,"[32] his grounds being, principally, that "legislator civilis fert leges ut minister Dei per potestatem ab ipso acceptam,"[33] "jus divinum, et naturale dictat, servandas esse justas leges a legitimis principibus positas,"[34] and that "haec potestas est necessaria ad convenientem gubernationem reipublicae humanae."[35] Vitoria takes the same position, and on similar grounds.[36]

There are several difficulties inherent in the application of these conditions, and perhaps the most difficult problems concern the unjust law. "Lex iniusta non est lex" is an oft-invoked Augustinian axiom: Suárez adduces it as an exception to the argument that the people must accept the laws they are given,[37] and Vitoria concludes that "Ego pro certo habeo, quod omnes leges injustae, etiam Papae, non obligant in foro conscientiae;"[38] that is all

[32] De Legibus, Liber III, Cap. XXI, para. 5.

[33] Ibid., para. 6.

[34] Ibid., para. 7.

[35] Ibid., para. 8.

[36] V. Chapter I, footnote 29, supra.

[37] De Legibus, Liber III, Cap. XIX, para. 11.

[38] De Potestate Papae et Concilii, Prop. XVII, para. 18, Relecciones, Tomo II, p. 269.

very well, but what is an unjust law? Vitoria reiterates the Thomist definition: a law is unjust when it fails to be "primum potestas in ferente; deinde finis, scilicet, propter bonum commune; postremo forma, ut scilicet, secundum sequalitatem proportionis imponat subditis leges onerosas."[39] But that only begs the question; who decides the character of these aspects? Furthermore, both Suárez[40] and Vitoria[41] conclude that tyrants should be obeyed, because a tyrannical order is better than no order at all; it is true, of course, that the necessity to obey a tyrant's law does not mean that that law is binding in conscience, but the distinction would seem fine enough to be irrelevant in practice, while, anyway, it has been said that unjust laws should not even be obeyed: we should obey God rather than man, etc. The most telling indication of the difficulty surrounding the whole concept is provided by Suárez, in one of his reasons for accepting

[39] Ibid., p. 266.

[40] "Minus enim malum est, sic gubernari [i.e., by a tyrant,] quam omnino non gubernari." De Legibus, Liber III, Cap. X, para. 8.

[41] "Certe videtur, quod leges quae sunt convenientes Reipublicae, obligent, etiam si ferantur a tyranno, non quidem quia a tyranno latae, sed ex consensu Reipublicae, cum sanctius sit ut serventur leges a tyranno latae, quam quod nullae serventur;" Relecciones, Tomo II, De Potestate Civili, para. 23, p. 208.

tyranny, namely, that if the refusal to comply with the demands of a tyrannical regime were considered licit, "quilibet subditus vellet superiorem suum judicare, & consequenter illi obedientiam negare, quod absurdissimum est".[42] Herein lies what seems to be a universal problem of human society, for it bears within it the possibility of the society's collapse (which involves further arguments about the degree to which such an event can sometimes be desirable, if at all); the importance of law testifies to the seriousness of the problem, and I shall be referring to it when discussing some of the literary aspects in later chapters.

At this point, it seems useful to recall that, while the theorists agree that obedience to just law is the guarantee of liberty, they do not suggest that there should be no areas of private decision. Suárez agrees with Aquinas that it is impractical to command good and prohibit vice in civil law.[43] There are many realms of human activity where the subject is entitled to choose a thing without the guidance or coercion of the law, and, as has been said, external circumstances have a bearing, in practice, on man's

[42] De Legibus, Liber III, Cap. X, para. 10.

[43] "leges civiles non posse ferri de omnibus actibus omnium & singularum virtutum," ibid., Liber III, Cap. XII, para. 11; "non potest lex civilis prohibere omnia vitia contra omnes virtutes," ibid., para. 12.

liberty. Official acknowledgement of that is evident in the endless succession of Royal Letters Patent which the Spanish Crown sent to the colonists throughout the four centuries of Spanish rule in the New World; the interest of these documents is that they were intended to stop the enslavement of the Indians and to afford them the same basic rights that Castilian subjects enjoyed. Their gist, therefore, tells us what it meant not to be slave, i.e., what some of those areas were in which a man could freely choose his course of action: he must be allowed to own property, to marry and have a family, to find sufficient food and rest, to be able to live without danger to life and limb, and to find his chance of spiritual salvation; such were the main activities in which the state said that the subject should exercise his own judgement and responsibility (v. Appendix II). As is well-known, the practice, in Indian affairs, did not even begin to match the theory. Perhaps more important in a discussion of the concept of liberty is another reference to the arguments concerning the nature of the Indians, for the disputes concerned, not the principles of a free man's private responsibilities, but whether or not the Indians should even be considered free men; these disputes have been analysed by a number of authors - suffice it to recall here that the case against the Indians was that

they should not be treated as free men because they did not possess sufficient natural reason (in that they reportedly indulged in sodomy, cannibalism, human sacrifice, and other activities denoting an irrational nature), while the case for the Indians was based - necessarily - on the grounds that their sins were sins of ignorance which could be eradicated by demonstrations of reason.

As regards that aspect of liberty which, in Chapter I, I referred to as "political" liberty, some Spanish theorists were less happy to accept the doctrinal conclusions in toto, and were more concerned with citizens' participation in government than was deemed necessary by doctrine. This political participation - if it may be thus described - is expressed in terms of the subject's liberty to advise and criticise the monarch, and the monarch's duty to seek this counsel. Hence, for instance, Rivadeneyra, saying that one difference between a King and a tyrant is that the King "se huelga de ser avisado con libertad y aun reprendido con modestia cuando ha errado,"[44] whilst the three necessary qualities of any "buen consejero" must be "grande experiencia, mucha caridad, y libertad en el decir,"[45]

[44] Tratado de la Religión, Libro II, Cap. 9, p. 321.

[45] Ibid., Cap. 25, p. 419.

for, as he says in the following chapter, clever thoughts are useless if they are never expressed; furthermore, "es muy importante esta libertad en el buen consejero, porque es rara y se halla en pocos"[46] - said reticence, whether inspired by fear or love, being not at all useful. Most writers - from expediency or otherwise - are careful to point out that the freedom to advise in no way implies lack of restraint, or exemption from law. Madariaga, for example: "Es la libertad el nervio de la vida del consejo y la que haze a los hombres generosos ..." but the law may recommend restraint at certain times, "Y ningún hombre político ha de tener por servidumbre, este no poder hablar, siéndole prohibido por la ley: antes goza entonces de mayor libertad" - because such a prohibition, explains Madariaga, is doubtless designed to protect us from our ambition, avarice, etc;[47] in other words, a political liberty must always be subservient to the requirements of natural and moral liberty. Mendo writes: "... deje (the Prince) decir a sus Ministros su parecer con libertad, y sin miedo ... Pero de tal suerte se ha de decir la verdad a los Reyes, que no les exaspere el modo; ... hablar con mucha libertad, no es aconsejar,

[46] Ibid., Cap. 26, p. 423.

[47] Del Senado y de su Príncipe, Cap. 30, p. 362.

sino ofender,"[48] and Fajardo implies the same discipline: "Decir verdades más para descubrir el mal gobierno, que para que se enmiende, es una libertad que parece advertimiento, y es murmuración; parece celo, y es malicia. Por tan malo la juzgo como a la lisonja, porque si en ésta se halla el feo delito de la servidumbre, en aquélla una falsa especie de la libertad."[49]

But, withal, liberty in the body politic - as distinct from within the individual - is primarily a matter of subjection to just rule which is also stable. For Vitoria, "Quod non est minor libertas in regali principatu, quam in Aristocratico et Democratico. Quia cum eadem sit potestas, ut supra probatum est, sive in uno, sive in pluribus, sit, et tantum uni melius sit subjici quam pluribus (tot enim sunt domini quot sunt superiores); ergo non est minor libertas ubi omnes uni sunt subditi, quam pluribus, ..."[50] and, for Fajardo, "no consiste la libertad en buscar ésta, o aquélla forma de govierno, sino en la conservación

[48] P. Andrés Mendo, Príncipe Perfecto, y Ministros Ajustados. Documentos Políticos y Morales, (Salamanca, 1656), doc. 69, paras. 9-11.

[49] Idea de un Príncipe Político Christiano, Emp. XLVIII, para. 14.

[50] Relecciones, Tomo II, De Potestate Civili, para 11, 1st Concl., 1st Corollary, p. 190.

de aquél que constituyó el largo uso, y aprovó la experiencia, en quien se guarde justicia y se conserve la quietud pública, supuesto que se ha de obedecer a un modo de dominio, porque nunca padece más la libertad, que en tales mudanças."[51] An aphorism of Alamos y Barrientos, one of the Tacitus commentators, posits three conditions for assessing the liberty in a republic:

> La primera, quando no ay en ella poderío que sobrepuje, o iguale las leyes, sino que por ellas sólo se determinan igualmente todas las diferencias de los ciudadanos sin aceptación de personas. La segunda, quando los Magistrados del govierno, y justicia, no sirven ni agradan al poderío de un particular con afrenta suya, teniendo por merced hazer su gusto, como a medio de su acrecentamiento, sino que proceden conforme a la verdad, y guardando la dignidad, y entereza devida a su oficio. La tercera, quando la misma República no está oprimida del señorío de un particular; sino que todos los ciudadanos posseen por igual la libertad, y tienen igual esperanza de mercedes, y oficios por virtudes, y merecimientos. Y procediéndose al contrario en estos tres capítulos, es certíssima señal de lo que se va assentando en ella la tiranía;[52]

the target of the writer's strictures seems obvious enough.

An indispensable corollary of all that is that the King must himself behave and legislate according to the precepts of divine and natural law, as is made clear by every

[51] op. cit., Emp. LXXVIII, para. 5.

[52] Alamos y Barrientos, Tácito Español, Ilustrado con Aforismos, (Madrid, 1614), Aforismo A 112, p. 206.

writer on the subject that I have read. As Suárez puts it, it is God who gives laws, man's role being only to transmit them, so the Prince must be subject to them;[53] if laws are just laws, they bind in conscience, so the Prince commits a sin if he breaks them, just as do his subjects.[54]

"Political" liberty is not of great importance as a part of the fundamental concept of liberty described in the foregoing, and the failings of the Spanish monarchy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and of its administrators, need no comment from me. However, it is worth adducing a few historical examples to suggest the difference between the theory and the practice of that aspect of liberty. First, one or two contemporary comments on the problem of liberty of counsel are appropriate.

In 1605, the Venetian Ambassador to Spain, Simon Contareni, reports as follows:

> In quanto al Consiglio, che è la seconda parte dell'ultimo punto, dirò che vi è un Consiglio

[53] De Legibus, Liber III, Cap. XXXV, "Utrum legislator suis legibus obligetur," v.e.g. para. 26: "posse legislatorem sua lege obligari, quia fert legem ut minister Dei, cuius auctoritas in illa obligatione intervenit."

[54] The criterion of obedience to just law as a basis of political as well as of natural liberty perhaps goes some way to explain the problem posed by libertad de conciencia, and the consequent Spanish opposition to it (v. Appendix III).

> nella Spagna il quale come supremo dovrebbe commandare su tutto, ma non è libero che di solo nome, e dirò all' EE. VV. che non havvi nella Spagna alcun uomo che ardisca dire liberamente la sua opinione e molto meno se in qualche cosa è contraria alla voluntà del duca di Lerma; e por averlo fatto solamente una volta l'arcivescovo di Toledo, ch'era il maestro di scuola del re, cadde en disgrazia e Rodrigo Vasques che era il presidente di Castiglia fu messo in questo posto, e suo padre uomo eminentissimo fu tolto dall' impiego e scacciato dalla corte sicchè poco dopo morì; ed un altro che era Inquisitore generale per il medesimo motivo cadde nella stessa disgrazia.[55]

As a foreigner, Contareni might have any number of reasons for criticising unfairly, but the Spanish commentator Cabrera mentions some of these cases in his Relaciones, and sees them in a similar light. For example, he has this to say with regard to the case of Rodrigo Vásquez: "Todos han tenido por riguroso término el que se ha usado con él, porque era muy bien quisto y gobernaba con satisfacción; ... no parece bastante culpa [viz., certain advice he had offered Philip II] para lo que se ha hecho con él, pues debía de aconsejar lo que le parecía que convenía."[56]

[55] Relazioni degli stati europei lette al Senato dagli ambasciatori veneti nel secolo decimosettimo, raccolte ed annotate da Nicolò Barozzi e Guglielmo Berchet, Serie 1, Spagna, (Venice, 1856), Vol. 1, p. 325.

[56] Relación dated 19th June, 1600, in Relaciones de las Cosas Sucedidas, principalmente en la Corte, 1599-1614, D. Luis Cabrera de Córdoba, criado y cronista del Rey D. Felipe 2º, (Madrid, 1857).

In such cases, political intrigue was more influential than political theory, and a proper analysis of the events is best left to historians. Adverse criticism of official policies certainly did not always lead to reprisal: Furió Ceriol's Remedios of 1573 was very critical of Philip II's policies in the Low Countries, saying that punishment should be administered with justice and mercy, and that it was therefore wrong to punish the innocent nine-tenths of Flanders for the crimes of one tenth: the obvious solution was to pardon them and withdraw.[57] But that was in the reign of Philip II, and Furió Ceriol seems to have enjoyed long-standing royal favour.[58] The atmosphere apparently changed almost as soon as the Marquis of Denia (Duke of Lerma) took the reins: as early as 1599, Iñigo Ibáñez was imprisoned, tortured and condemned to death (the sentence being later commuted to imprisonment),

[57] Remedios, included in El Concejo y Consejeros del Príncipe, ed. cit. To my knowledge, the Remedios never incurred disfavour, although two other works by Ceriol were prohibited by the Council of Trent, namely, Rhetoricorum Libri III and Bononia, sive de libris sacris convertendis in vernaculam linguam libri II, the condemnation being concerned with their approval of said translation.

[58] Charles V afforded Ceriol special protection, while Philip II employed him until his death in 1592. For an explanation of the faction struggles with which the Remedios was associated, v. J. H. Elliott, Imperial Spain 1469-1716, (Pelican, 1970), pp. 258 ff.

for distributing a pamphlet ostensibly approving the current administration, but attacking the previous King.[59]

In the field of political liberty (in the sense of liberty of counsel), the difference between theory and practice is plain to see: in spite of the fairly straightforward theories propounded by those writing on the subject, the practice was quite another story. Such inconsistency is, of course, only one aspect of the vast problems attendant upon the attempt to make practice match theory throughout the gamut of human affairs. Recent research continues to show that Golden Age Spain was no different from most civilised societies in having to struggle with the difficulties inherent in the maintenance of law and order and the government of a nation.[60] As Julio Caro Baroja concludes, nothing is simple and formularised about historical

[59] Iñigo Ibáñez, who was secretary to Philip III and Lerma, was heavily punished for his pamphlet "El confuso e ignorante gobierno del Rey passado," which may have been intended as, or taken as, a disguised attack on Lerma; his accomplices, however, were freed after one month's arrest. V. Cabrera, Relaciones dated 4th February, 1600; 23rd September, 1600; 4th October, 1603; 2nd February, 1605; 14th May, 1605; and 31st August, 1610, on Ibáñez' death.

[60] Such as, e.g., Albert A. Sicroff, Les Controverses des Statuts de "pureté de sang" en Espagne du XV^e au XVII^e siècle, (Paris, 1960), and Julio Caro Baroja, La Sociedad Criptojudía en la Corte de Felipe IV, (Madrid, 1963).

situations: we find pressures working against pressures, and the idea of a monolithic, disciplined Spanish society of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is utterly misleading; the nature of that society was "mucho más flúida y contradictoria de lo que creen sus apologistas o sus censores."[61]

To close this chapter on the Spanish theorists' conception of liberty, I would point out that most of the quotations I have used for demonstration are, in their contexts, in the nature of passing remarks, and do not form part of any great controversy or dispute concerning the nature of liberty. That is a reflection of the fact that the ideas I have outlined were indeed basic assumptions, commonly accepted. There were problems associated with these assumptions, certainly, and they were faced and argued, but the fundamental nature of liberty seems to have remained undisputed in the period under examination. As a final example, to illustrate that, I would like to quote part of the defence of Fray Sánchez de las Brozas (El Brocense) to charges brought against him by the Inquisition, in 1600. Fray Sánchez had asked for an audience, and the official record reads as follows (my underlinings):

[61] op. cit., pp. 125-8.

> Dijo: que él ha pedido audiencia como tiene dicho para decir que le han dicho que en Salamanca dicen que este ha dicho que niega el libre albedrío, y que lo que pasa es que en el libro que este ha compuesto de la retórica niega haber fortuna, y en el capítulo que en el dicho libro hace de las causas naturales e luego de las humanas dice entre otras cosas que lo que ha de acontescer a un hombre es necesario, y que de aquí toman ocasión de esta necesidad que pone en ello, a decir que niega el libre albedrío; y declarándose más dice que no hay 'fortuna' sino 'hado,' y que en este 'hado' es en quien pone necesidad, y esta palabra 'hado' llama este providencia de Dios, y que una cosa es el libre albedrío para no ir los hombres tras del pecado y otra cosa es estar sujetos a lo que les ha de acontescer que es el 'hado,' y así son diferentes libre albedrío y hado, y que negar el libre albedrío es cosa de herejes y este no se mete en eso.[62]

Fray Sánchez is affirming his belief in natural liberty, and the orthodoxy of that belief is clearly stated.

It can be seen, then, that, for Spaniards of the Golden Age, liberty is primarily a function of reason and will, that it is a liberty to choose the good, that it thereby entails voluntary obedience to just law, and that, in a state of perfection, it is the spiritual liberty which few men, if any, ever achieve.[63]

[62] "Proceso original que la Inquisición de Valladolid hizo al maestro Fray Sánchez de las Brozas, llamado vulgarmente el Brocense," in Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España, Vol. II, (Madrid, 1943), p. 125.

[63] A common usage of the term itself, libertad, refers to exemptions from law enjoyed by those who had a political or legal right to them, a historical matter which I need not,

Afterword to Part I

Of the foregoing, most is already known; it needed to be stated in order to focus attention on the main issues of this thesis. I have taken the risk of quoting from a mixed collection of writers - political commentators, jurists, theologians, moralists - while remaining aware, as far as I have been able, that they are trying to examine different things for different reasons, and that even within these groups they take different stands on issues - e.g., amongst the jurists, Dominicans differ with Jesuits; amongst theologians, the pro-Aristotelians argue with the anti-Aristotelians over the status of the Indians; amongst political writers, some (like Fajardo) are prepared to compromise moral standards if political realities so require, whilst others (like Quevedo) are not; and so on. In all these various approaches to theory, however, the nature of liberty is one of the assumptions which - as far as I can see - is in no wise disputed.

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and should not examine. Really, that kind of liberty is associated with human liberty in name only - it means, after all, exemption from law - as is perhaps shown by its having several synonyms (e.g., franqueza, fuero, exención, privilegio), while libertad in the fundamental philosophical sense has none. Libertad as exemption seems to derive from the Roman legal usage of libertas, concerning property rights (v. Justinian's Digesta, VIII-6-18).

I have given a disproportionate amount of attention to the matter of political liberty, because the disparity between the theory and the practice can be shown historically, and it seems worth showing how a fairly straightforward theory can become distorted and irrelevant in life. The real, important forms of liberty are rather more complex and are characterised by more difficult problems, which are virtually impossible to identify in action historically. Those problems can, however, be shown artistically, and the main purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how they may usefully be discussed in literary contexts.

PART II

THE THEORY AND ITS PROBLEMS REFLECTED IN SELECTED LITERARY WORKS

Chapter I

Lope de Vega's FUENTEOVEJUNA

Fuenteovejuna is concerned with, among other things, the problem of tyranny. The association of liberty with tyranny has already been shown in Part I of this thesis, and can be further demonstrated by a brief examination of the concept of tyranny, which, in many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish writings, involves the denial of liberty.

The concept of tyranny involves us in two problems: one is to define precisely what constitutes tyranny, the other is to decide (and agree) as to what action, if any, tyrannised citizens may take to ameliorate their situation.

Naturally, Spanish political philosophers, trying to decide when a ruler was not a king, but a tyrant, sought to arrive at a satisfactory definition of the latter - often by way of a comparison with the former. Juan de Mariana, for example, asserts that a king is good to everyone, protects property and life and does not enslave his subjects, whereas a tyrant always relies on force and deceit, persecutes and cripples his subjects, stops all activities "libero homine

dignas exercere," and so on.[1] Rivadeneyra employs a similar argument: "El verdadero rey está sujeto a las leyes de Dios y de la naturaleza; el tirano no tiene otra ley que su voluntad ... el uno tiene gran respeto a la honra de las mujeres honestas, el otro triunfa de la honestidad dellas; el uno se huelga de ser avisado con libertad y aun reprendido con modestía cuando ha errado, el otro ninguna cosa más aborrece que hombre grave, libre y virtuoso ..." etc.[2] Mártir Rizo, observing that "La Monarquía tiránica es aquélla donde el Señor, despreciando las leyes naturales, usa de la libertad de los súbditos como de sus esclavos,"[3] describes the same classic distinction between king and tyrant: "el rey se conforma con las leyes de la naturaleza, y el tirano las huella y desprecia."[4] Dictionary definitions offer a suitably concise reflection of contemporary thought on the subject - the 1611 edition of Covarrubias' dictionary, for example, informs us, under the heading Tirano, that

> Este nombre, cerca de los antiguos se tomaba en buena parte, y significaba tanto como señor, Rey, y monarca, el qual tenía potestad plena sobre los súbditos: ... Después se vino

[1] De Rege et Regis Institutione, Libri III, (Moguntiae, 1605), Liber I, Cap. V, p. 50.

[2] Tratado de la Religión, Libro II, Cap. 9, pp. 320-1.

[3] Norte de Príncipes, ed. cit., Cap. IV, p. 27.

[4] Ibid., p. 28.

> a reduzir a que tan solamente significasse al que por fuerza, o maña, sin razón, y sin derecho se apoderasse del dominio, e imperio de los Reynos y Repúblicas: y de aquí llamamos tirano comunmente a qualquiera que con violencia, sin razón ni justicia se sale con hazer su voluntad. Llamamos a los mercaderes tiranos, quando nos venden la cosa por precio subido. Tiranía, y tyranizar, y estar uno tyranizado, es avasallado, y sugeto a la rigurosa voluntad de otro ..."

The Diccionario de Autoridades gives, under the heading Tyrano: "1. Señor que gobierna sin justicia, y a medida de su voluntad," and under Tyranía: "1. Gobierno a la voluntad del señor sin justicia ni regla ... 3. Transláticamente se llama qualquier afecto, que de tal modo se apodera de la voluntad, que parece que la violenta su libertad."

The significant common denominator in all these definitions is the tyrant's contempt for law and justice, his power being exercised "sin razón," "sin derecho" or "sin justicia." If moral and natural liberty consist in and depend on obedience to just law, the threat to liberty that tyranny represents is plain.

Definitions of the terms became increasingly important in the political arguments of the late Middle Ages and sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as men wrestled with the problem that C. H. McIlwain describes as being comprised of the opposition of two beliefs: on the one hand, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," and, on the other,

"We must obey God rather than man."[5] That problem involves us in the second difficulty mentioned above, namely, deciding what to do about tyranny when satisfied that one was faced with it.

Amongst European thinkers, conclusions on the matter covered every shade of opinion, from uncritical obedience, critical obedience and attempts to reform, to disobedience and tyrannicide.[6] Spanish theorists reached similarly diverse conclusions - Suárez, for instance, recommended the acceptance of tyranny, simply to avoid worse circumstances, such as anarchy,[7] while, at the other extreme, Vázquez de Menchaca condoned the killing of tyrants.[8] Others were more circumspect and correspondingly more equivocal; Mariana, for instance, postulated certain conditions for the legitimate killing of a tyrant: he had to be a usurper, or

[5] The Growth of Political Thought in the West, (London, 1932), p. 369.

[6] For surveys, examinations and analyses of these theories see McIlwain, op. cit.; G. H. Sabine, A History of Political Theory, (London, 1951); Michael B. Foster (Vol. I) and W. T. Jones (Vol. II), Masters of Political Thought, (London, 1961).

[7] "minus malum est, per illum [tyrannum] gubernari, quam omnino carere justa coactione, et directione ..." De Legibus, Book III, Chapter X, para. 9.

[8] "Tyrannorum occisio inculpata est," Controversias Fundamentales, Lib. I, Cap. VIII, para 41 (title).

extremely lawless, or sacrilegious, he had to be given prior warning that his subjects were dissatisfied, the result should not prove to be a worse situation, etc.[9] Needless to say, no one theorist was able to resolve the problem completely;[10] why that should be so is something Lope is able to demonstrate, and by studying his treatment of the problem in Fuenteovejuna we can see reflected perennial problems of liberty.

In Act III of Fuenteovejuna, the gathering of the mob and the subsequent murder of the Comendador take place amid shouts of "¡Mueran los tiranos!" and at this stage of the play no-one in the audience is likely to argue the point of

[9] De Rege, Cap. VI, "An tyrannum opprimere fas sit."

[10] In his Recherches sur le theme paysan dans la «comedia» au temps de Lope de Vega, (Bordeaux, 1965), Noël Salomon has this to say: "En principe, le droit de la révolte contre le tyran était reconnu par l'idéologie féodale et monarcho-seigneuriale. Saint Thomas d'Aquin le reconnaît expressément. Et plus d'un juriste du siècle d'or a developpé la théorie de ce droit: notamment Francisco de Vitoria, Francisco Suárez et Juan de Mariana. Mais en pratique, comme nous le verrons, la révolte de fait des sujets, ou des vassaux, ne recevait pas la consécration que lui concédait la théorie." (p. 856, fn. 25). Couched in such vague terms, that summary could mean anything or nothing; but, if we are to infer that Vitoria, Suárez and Mariana were among those who conceded "la consécration que lui concédait la théorie," the statement is, in my estimation, an inaccurate simplification: in Mariana's analysis of the problem, the conditions and qualifications attaching to the right of revolt are of decisive importance, while Vitoria and Suárez, far from granting the right of revolt, adduced some good reasons for submitting to the rule of a tyrant (cf. Part I, Chapter II, pp. 41-42, supra).

the accusation of tyranny. It is when we compare the staged events with written theory that problems arise, and it seems useful to ask where and why these problems occur, and what they mean; in what sense is the Comendador a tyrant, or not a tyrant, given the criteria of the theorists, based on self-centred transgression of law? In what other ways, if any, may tyranny be seen?

The first point which should be made in this context is that an integral part of the play's structure[11] is the role of the Reyes Católicos, who are seen to be constantly in the political background, inexorably pushing forward their task of bringing the rule of law and Christian justice to a unified Spain; we already know that Ferdinand and Isabela were regarded as exemplary monarchs by Lope's contemporaries, by virtue of their success in this venture. We are made aware, then, that Fuenteovejuna is one of the regions of the country which this new order of justice has not yet reached, that the society we are watching in the scenes set around Fuenteovejuna is a society which is in its last phase, so that the laws and customs which formerly helped sustain the encomienda system have lost their force, with the result that

[11] Examined and explained by, e.g., William C. McCrary, in "Fuenteovejuna: its Platonic vision and execution," Studies in Philology, LVIII, 1961, pp. 179-192.

an anarchical situation has developed - anarchical, that is, for men like the Comendador, the second-in-command of the Order of Calatrava, with nobody to answer to, bar, in this case, the young and naïf Master of the Order, whose will the Comendador subverts with little difficulty. In effect, this manipulation of the Maestre (made explicit in the opening scenes of the play, vv. 41-172),[12] is itself a form of tyranny - the Comendador is setting himself up as the supreme authority in the Order, and perverting its function to suit his own designs, which, as the spectator knows, are opposed to those of the Reyes Católicos, and thus opposed to all that the latter represent in the way of natural and civil law.

One of the main criteria for judging a tyrant being the extent of his refusal to acknowledge natural law and its ramifications, we must examine the Comendador's behaviour in this light. Obviously, we may say of the Comendador that he breaks natural and moral law. In his pursuit of Laurencia, for example, he brings about the distortion of the girl's own natural order, an effect we see in Act I:

> Pardiez, más precio poner,
> Pascuala, de madrugada,
> un pedazo de lunada
> al huego para comer,

[12] Fuenteovejuna, edited by W. S. Mitchell, "Bell's Spanish Classics," (London, 1966); all quotations are taken from this edition.

con tanto zalacatón
de una rosca que yo amaso,
y hurtar a mi madre un vaso
del pegado canjilón;
.....
que cuantas raposerías,
con su amor y sus porfías,
tienen estos bellacones;

(I, 217-244)

Laurencia is here describing what would be the traditional vida aldeana, with all her activities in harmony with her station in life, were it not for her rejection of the human male, in whom she has, she says, no interest (v. 273, "No fiarse de ninguno," in agreement with Pascuala's unflattering description of the male, with its conclusion, "Pues tales los hombres son," [265]), thus denying a fundamental law and function of her womanhood. This distortion, aggravated by the Comendador, eventually results in Laurencia's complete breakdown, culminating in her frenzied behaviour at the beginning of Act III.

The ways in which the Comendador causes such effects by breaking natural and moral laws are obvious enough - violence, sexual promiscuity, treason and so on; but one immense difficulty which undermines all the theoretical definitions of tyranny is that most of us break natural and moral laws every day, and possibly, on a minor scale, in ways similar to the Comendador's; we might even envy the license

he so obviously enjoys. Certainly, we cannot be surprised if kings and nobles and other men in positions of authority share the same weaknesses which beset the rest of the human race.

Lope suggests, in several ways, that such perplexities are involved when men try to apportion guilt and responsibility. On the one hand, he points to the similarity between the Comendador's behaviour and that of the city audience watching the play:

> ¡Ah! Bien hayan las ciudades,
> que a hombres de calidades
> no hay quien sus gustos ataje;
> allá se precian casados
> que visiten sus mujeres.
>
> (II, 141-5)

On the other, he makes it quite clear that the villagers are far from blameless. Many of the women give in to the Comendador quite willingly, thus contributing to his desire for excess. There are many reminders of this lack of feminine discretion, beginning with the first conversation between Laurencia and Pascuala:

> PASCUALA Yo, Laurencia, he visto alguna
> tan brava, y pienso que más;
> y tenía el corazón
> brando como una manteca
> .....
>
> LAURENCIA ¡Cuántas mozas en la villa,
> del Comendador fiadas,
> andan ya descalabradas!
>
> (I, 179-195)

His listeners are never surprised when the Comendador makes his frequent references to his conquests, such as:

COMENDADOR ¿No se rindió Sebastiana,
mujer de Pedro Redondo,
con ser casadas entrambas,
y la de Martín del Pozo,
habiendo apenas pasado
dos días del desposorio?

LAURENCIA Esas, senor, ya tenían,
de haber andado con otros,
el camino de agradaros; (I, 798-806)

In Act II, yet more women are implicated:

COMENDADOR ¿Qué hay de Pascuala?
.....
¿Qué hay de Olalla?
.....
¿Qué hay de Inés? (II, 199-217)

The girls he names are all "willing," and give rise to Flores' remark,

mas hay mujeres también,
porque el filósofo dice
que apetecen a los hombres
como la forma desea
la materia; (II, 230-34)

Meanwhile, the menfolk only seem to become really roused when the Mayor's daughter is abducted.

So, in the milieu of Fuenteovejuna, none of these accusations of transgression of natural and moral law carry much weight - few individuals are totally innocent. Either, therefore, we call the whole human race tyrants or potential tyrants, or we pretend that kings and nobles are <u>not</u> susceptible

to the same temptations as other men, or we set about the impossible task of distinguishing between major and minor transgressions of law - distinctions which Lope shows to be utterly irrelevant in practice, even if conceivable in theory. There is, however, another way in which the spectator can assess the Comendador's tyranny, and that is by noticing the latter's own concept of law and justice.

In two confrontations with the assembled villagers, the Comendador is forced to try and defend and define the laws by which he justifies his behaviour, and by which he acts. The first argument hinges on the conflicting views of honor expressed by the opposing parties, and the Comendador becomes very confused because of his reluctance or inability to distinguish moral law from social custom (Act II, Scene IV, especially vv. 117-150). The villagers assert what they consider to be their rights under the moral law, ("... no es justo/ que nos quitéis el honor." [II, 126-7]), while the Comendador asserts what he sees as his prerogative by social custom ("vuestras mujeres se honran," [II, 137] etc.) They both use the same word, honor, to say what they mean - hence the confusion. According to the social customs invoked by the Comendador, women are privileged when seduced by a man of noble rank; according to the moral law affirmed by the villagers, not only is such behaviour reprehensible, so also is

the attempt to induce innocent women to indulge in it, whether by bribery, coercion or just satisfaction of their desires.

In the ideal society, moral law and social custom would be in harmony; when we are shown circumstances in which they are contradictory, we must conclude that there is something very wrong with the social custom. Yet, social custom is the law the Comendador chooses to uphold (when it suits him), no matter how much it may conflict with natural law or moral law. The perversion of law which the Comendador's behaviour represents is emphasised in this scene by Lope's presentation of Leonelo, whose appearance at the beginning of Act II is his only one in the play. Leonelo is a licenciate in law, who has been studying at Salamanca, and says he has tried to learn something ("Saber he procurado lo importante," [II, 40]). Having pointed out his knowledge of law, Lope uses him to express shock and horror at the demeanour of the Comendador: "¿Vióse desvergüenza igual?" (II, 121); "¡Cielo! ¿Que por esto pasas?" (II, 162).

Immediately following this demonstration of the Comendador's attitude to law, we have an indication of his notion of justice. After the villagers have left the square, he asks Flores,

> Y el villano, ¿ha de quedarse
> con ballesta y sin castigo? (II, 170-1)

to which Flores replies,

> Anoche pensé que estaba
> a la puerta de Laurencia,
> y a otro, que su presencia
> y su capilla imitaba,
> de oreja a oreja le di
> un beneficio famoso. (II, 172-7)

Whether or not there is any truth in this claim of Flores, the fact that he adduces it to placate the Comendador is a revealing commentary on the latter's ideas of judicial procedure. Indeed, the Comendador is not in the least interested in the wounding of an innocent man, his only reply being, "¿Dónde estará aquel Frondoso?" (II, 178). Further, although he talks about castigo, it seems, for him, inseparable from vengeance:

> que hasta que llegue ocasión
> al freno de la razón
> hago la venganza estar, (II, 197-9)

a confusion which is apparent on other occasions, cf. I, 855-6 ("Mas yo tomaré venganza/ del agravio y del estorbo,") and II, 372-3 ("Licencia les quiero dar .../ para vengarse de tí.")[13]

The second confrontation referred to above occurs

[13]Aquinas regards vindicatio as, in certain circumstances, a legitimate judicial factor, but adds some suitable qualifications: "Est ergo in vindicatione considerandus vindicandus animus. Sic enim eius intentio feratur principaliter in malum illius de quo vindictam sumit, et ibi quiescat, est omnino illicitum; [etc.]" (Summa Theologica, II-II, Q. CVIII, Art. 1). It seems clear that the Comendador's animus would disqualify his venganza as a constituent of justice.

when the Comendador suspends the wedding ceremonies, and this is where the Comendador has to defend his idea of law and his practise of justice (II, 709-781). Here, the villagers are subjected to a sustained barrage of equivocation, part of which is of particular interest in this context as the basis of the charge against Frondoso:

> No es cosa,
> Pascuala, en que yo soy parte.
> Es esto contra el maestre
> Téllez Girón, que Dios guarde;
> es contra toda su orden,
> es su honor, y es importante
> para el ejemplo, el castigo; (II, 733-9)

The audience has been able to see all the conditions which qualify the Comendador's bland statement of hierarchical orthodoxy: the reasons for Frondoso's defiance, the contempt the Comendador has for the Maestre, the fallacy of "No es cosa/ ... en que yo soy parte," the previous argument about honor, the absurdity of talking about ejemplo, and the pretence that this is castigo (rather than venganza). All of these factors make nonsense of the Comendador's claim to be acting to uphold the law as we understand it.[14]

[14]Of this speech, Salomon says, "Pour le Commandeur, il ne fait pas de doute que la résistance des manants a une signification antiféodale, et que la révolte se fera un jour contre l'Ordre militaire tout entier, s'il n'y met bon ordre a temps en faisant un exemple" (op. cit., p. 855, fn. 24). However, the Comendador's words surely represent nothing more than a legitimate and orthodox defence of the social order; their importance consists in the irony with which they are imbued by the dramatic context, an irony which has profound implications.

The trouble is, that although the Comendador's procedures are no more than a parody of justice, there is a certain legalistic truth in the postures he assumes. Frondoso did commit a crime, which, strictly speaking, is a crime against the Maestre and his Order and, under normal circumstances, deserving of exemplary punishment. The same may be said of the Comendador's silly reply to Esteban's reprimand:

> Nunca yo quise quitarle
> su mujer, pues no lo era. (II, 756-7)

The legalistic truth implicit in that remark is that, while a husband (or father, brother or any other blood-relative of the girl) has certain rights of retribution and reparation for advances forced upon his wife,[15] a friend or fiancé has none - adultery is more serious than simple fornication. While this does not mitigate the Comendador's tyranny, it does demonstrate how easily human law may be reduced to an instrument of tyranny, and even though

> ... reyes hay en Castilla,
> que nuevas órdenes hacen,
> con que desórdenes quitan, (II, 758-61)

we can see that even laws which are not obviously unjust can become mere instruments of tyranny when exploited by the unscrupulous.

[15] v.e.g., Fuero Juzgo, Libro III, Título 3, "Titol de las mujeres libres que lievan por fuerza;" Las Siete Partidas, Libro VII, Título 20, etc.

The Comendador's ideas of law and justice are thus a perversion of all that a seventeenth-century audience might consider law and justice to be. Obviously, therefore, the spectator is able to condemn the Comendador as a tyrant, given the theoretical criteria. However, these criteria do not present the characters in the play with an unanswerable case for calling the Comendador a tyrant. Law and life combined are shown to be too complex. Because of the blurring of issues and the legalistic half-truths and the absence of impartial witnesses, no character in the play can point to one isolated, specific instance and objectively affirm the Comendador's tyranny. The only people associated with the play who are in a position to make an objective judgement about the Comendador, and have the necessary information to do so, are the audience, who have seen through all the conditions and qualifications and the half-truths of the Comendador's justice, and who therefore have more knowledge of the problem than any stage-character, from the King down to Mengo. Lope is, I think, making us see that the only way a judgement of this sort can really be made according to the academic criteria is by being a witness to all the circumstances surrounding the case, and that that is impossible in real life.

Even more distracting than the intellectual difficulties surrounding the assessment of tyranny in a practical

situation is the problem represented by the massacre itself, for Lope completes the logic of his presentation of the subject by showing how the villagers themselves become tyrannical. For the first two acts of the play, we watch the Comendador trampling on all the laws pertinent to the villagers - moral law, natural law and civil law. This culminates in the closing scenes of Act II, where he disrupts the wedding - an occasion on which all laws relating to man are seen to be in harmony - and, robbing Esteban, the Mayor, of his staff, beats him with it. By abducting Laurencia the Comendador offends moral law, by stealing her from her father he offends natural law, and, as the last straw, by assaulting Esteban with his own staff of office, he destroys the last vestige of law remaining in the village, viz., their local civil law. As a result of all that the villagers finally become utterly lawless, that is, tyrannical; the uprising is, indeed, representative of the kind of mob rule or pupular rule that was as repugnant to Spanish theorists as any other kind of lawlessness.[16] The way in which Lope presents this breakdown of order has implications for political theory which need close examination.

[16] Fr. Juan de Santamaría's viewpoint is representative: 'Y assi dixo Aristoteles, que ninguna tyrania avia mayor, mas perniciosa, que la de un pueblo entero, que de suyo es inclinado a crueldad.' República, y Policía Christiana, (Barcelona, 1617), Chapter 1, folio 3.

The Comendador's tyranny having reduced the villagers to a similar state of lawlessness, the villagers begin (at the end of Act II and beginning of Act III) to call the Comendador a tyrant. In the first sixty lines of Act III we are shown an argument amongst the villagers, concerning what they ought, could or should do: what Lope is offering here is a peasant version of the academic controversies; various theories are suggested, and they all sound feasible. But the peasants are having to grapple with the pressures of circumstances which complicate theories. Juan Rojo's hope lies at first in the Reyes Católicos:

> Mas pues ya se publica y manifiesta
> que en paz tienen los reyes a Castilla,
> y su venida a Córdoba se apresta,
> vayan dos regidores de la villa
> y echándose a sus pies pidan remedio.
> (III, 24-28)

but Barrildo knows that the monarchs have too many other concerns to worry about:

> ... no podrá, ocupado,
> hacernos bien, con tanta guerra en medio
> (III, 31-2)

while Lope shows that the monarchs are nowhere near Córdoba anyway: they spend the play moving from Medina del Campo to Toro to Tordesillas.

A regidor then suggests, "desamparar la villa" (III, 34), but, as Juan replies, "¿Cómo es posible en tiempo

limitado?" (III, 35), and besides, what about Frondoso and Laurencia? In desperation, the regidor then voices the idea of assassination: "Morir, o dar la muerte a los tiranos" (III, 46). But that is an awesome, unheard-of recourse, and, even though Esteban seeks to justify it,

> El rey solo es señor después del cielo,
> y no bárbaros hombres inhumanos.
> Si Dios ayuda nuestro justo celo,
> ¿qué nos ha de costar? (III, 49-52)

such talk is never convincing, while, more to the point, doing the deed is another matter, hence Mengo's warning:

> Mirad, señores,
> que vais en estas cosas con recelo.
> Puesto que por los simples labradores
> estoy aquí que más injurias pasan,
> más cuerdo represento sus temores.
> (III, 52-6)

Mengo knows from experience that having a just cause guarantees nothing, that making wordy decisions is very different from actually hurling oneself against vicious, armed thugs. Juan Rojo joins the ranks of the insurrectionists, but his language is far from that of the academic theorists:

> Si nuestras desventuras se compasan,
> para perder las vidas, ¿qué aguardamos?
> Las casas y las viñas nos abrasan:
> tiranos son; a la venganza vamos.
> (III, 57-60)

Remembering that the play has shown several times how the villagers tried to counter the tyranny of the Comendador in what might be termed an idealistic manner, i.e., by

attempting to reform him, we find, when we combine that with the suggestions made in this first scene of Act III, that various solutions to the problem have been mooted. They are all, however, inconclusive; they do not lead to a decision. What does trip the balance and precipitate the decisive action? Not words, but the entry of a dishevelled and demented girl; not the strength of any theory written in a scholar's study, but the shattering arrival of Laurencia, hurling imprecations at the men, twisted out of shape by the Comendador's importunities, panic-stricken by Frondoso's perilous situation. That is the catalyst. Logic and theory are suddenly swept aside by the dramatist, for this is not imitatio libri, this is what happens. Lope is showing us that such problems as we have witnessed in the play are not, in practice, resolved rationally, in spite of the theorists' efforts to find rational solutions: the villagers' order having been disrupted on all levels, it is not to be expected that they should sit down and decide what to do on the basis of academic reasoning (although they try). The massacre, then, is not the result of an orderly reasoning process, but of the opposite: the complete breakdown of reason and order.

The whole atmosphere of the succeeding scenes relating to the uprising emphasises its essential irrationality: the blood-lust of all concerned, whether male or female; the

distortion of nature represented by the women's becoming warriors, assuming a temporary masculinity; the attacks on the members of the Comendador's household - not gratuitous, of course, but as sadistic as anything we have seen from the gentry; the sacking of the Comendador's house; the mutilation of his body after the murder, and so on. Lope specifically draws our attention to these final acts of mindless savagery in the comparative calm of the Court, when Flores reports the event to the King:

> rompen el cruzado pecho
> con mil heridas crueles,
> y por las altas ventanas
> le hacen que al suelo vuele,
> adonde en picas y espadas
> le recogen las mujeres.
> Llévanle a una casa muerto
> y a porfía, quien más puede
> mesa su barba y cabello
> y apriesa su rostro hieren.
> En efecto fué la furia
> tan grande que en ellos crece,
> que las mayores tajadas
> las orejas a ser vienen.
> .....
> Saqueáronle la casa,
> cual si de enemigos fuese,
> y gozosos entre todos
> han repartido sus bienes. (III, 327-348)

We might feel inclined to discount that as merely a part of Flores' slanted reporting, but Lope has made a point of including many of the details given in Rades' account of the massacre (and omitting some even gorier details, presumably on the grounds of taste), which reads as follows:

> Antes que diesse el anima a Dios, tomaron su cuerpo y con grande y regozijado alarido, diciendo, Vivan los Reyes y mueran los traidores: y le echaron por una ventana a la calle: y otros que alli estaban con lanças y espadas, pusieron las puntas arriba, para recoger en ellas el cuerpo, que aun tenia anima. Despues de caydo en tierra, le arrancaron las barbas y cabellos con grande crueldad: y otros con los pomos de las espadas le quebraron los dientes.... Estando juntos hombres, mugeres y niños, llevaron el cuerpo con grande regozijo a la plaça: y alli todos los hombres y mugeres le hizieron pedaços, arrastrandole, y haziendo en el grandes crueldades y escarnios: y no quisieron darle a sus criados, para enterrarle. De mas desto dieron saqomano a su casa, y le robaron toda su hazienda.[17]

Lope seems determined to draw our attention to the bestiality he found in his historical source, not only in the passionate scenes of the rebellion, when the audience would not be ready to make a detached judgement, but also, via Flores' report, in a later, less emotional context; and Flores' report is surely lent validity by the fact that the last picture implanted in our minds, before the scene switches to the Court, is of a normally bright and cheerful young girl - Pascuala - brandishing a weapon and hysterically shrieking "Moriré matando" (III, 267).

Prof. Spitzer, examining the language of the uprising, sees it as an ordering, rational process,[18] but I

[17] Fr. Francisco de Rades y Andrade, Chronica de las tres Ordenes y Cavallerias de Santiago, Calatrava y Alcantara, (Toledo, 1572), folio 79, Col. D - folio 80, Col. A.

[18] "A central theme and its structural equivalent in Lope's Fuenteovejuna," Hispanic Review, XXIII, 1955, pp. 274-292.

think he is a little too academic when he asserts that order is present even in the rebellion (in the cries of "¡Vivan los Reyes!") although other critics would support him.[19] I suggest that the pattern we are meant to see is one of disorder and tyranny among the villagers bringing the Comendador's evil home to roost, their mass behaviour being a reflection of, as well as the result of, the Comendador's behaviour. Prof. Parker makes some pertinent observations on the treasonable aspect of the Comendador's behaviour:[20] the Comendador is now destroyed by the treason of the villagers against him. The Comendador had trampled on the villagers, now they trample on him; he had denied them mercy, now they refuse it to him; he had denied them justice, now they deny it to him; he had

[19]Dr. Perry J. Powers, commenting on the words of the regidor at the meeting, "Ya, todo el árbol de paciencia roto,/ corre la nave de temor perdida" (III, 38-39), says that "We must understand the metaphor of the ship as foreshadowing the violence to come, but it does not characterise the citizens of Fuente Ovejuna as driven by ubbridled passions, like a ship before a gale;" it seems to me, though, that the latter is precisely the import of the metaphor. (The concept of the city-state in the dramas of Lope de Vega, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, [Johns Hopkins University, 1947,] pp. 53-4). Dr. Robert Fiore says, "All legal and peaceful means have been exhausted to recall the Comendador to a sense of duty:" they have not, they are simply unavailable or irrelevant; ("Natural law in the central ideological theme of Fuenteovejuna," Hispania, XLIX, 1966, pp. 75-80, v. p. 79.)

[20]"Reflections on a new definition of 'Baroque' drama," Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, XXX, 1953, pp. 142-151.

given girls to his henchmen for their pleasure, now his men are set upon by the same girls. Flores tells the King that

> En título de tirano
> le acumula todo el plebe,
> y a la fuerza desta voz
> el hecho fiero acometen; (III, 317-320)

there is a certain truth in that remark (although it is not the whole truth) and it offers an additional irony in suggesting that there is, in that respect, similarity between the villagers and the Comendador, who is himself so confused and convinced by his own rhetoric, as I shall demonstrate shortly. The process of cause and effect has come full circle, destroying the cause - but not the effects - of the disorder, and the motif of "Fuenteovejuna lo hizo" in the torture scene emphasises the fact that the villagers' act was a crime, that all of them did take part, and that the whole village is indeed guilty.

The implications of all that for political theory seem to be, that it is all very well to try and decide what to do about a tyrant, but, if we become victims of tyranny, the disruptive effect on our nature renders us incapable of looking to reason and discipline for a way out of our predicament. When we consider how the author has presented that factor, combined with the insight we are given into the difficulty of matching theory (encased as it is in mere words) to the elusive complexities of real life, and with the

demonstrations we are given of the ease with which the language of human law can be twisted so as to justify or disguise the evil intentions of the unscrupulous, we begin to see that, on the problem of tyranny, Lope has forcefully shown the inevitable discrepancy between theory and practice, and some of the reasons for it. I use the word 'practice' advisedly, remembering that this play, at least as far as Lope and his audience were concerned, deals with a historical situation and event, even though we do now have evidence to show the fallibility of Lope's probable source.[21]

It should be clear from the foregoing that such situations as the play describes present great problems for human liberty, with its dependence on reason and obedience to just law; these problems are particularly involved with the malleability of language and the way human malice can twist just law into unjust law. Of course, it is easy, and possible, to say that, since natural and moral liberty depend only on man's nature and the individual's moral condition, it is meaningless to ask if liberty is at stake in situations such

[21] V. Rafael Ramírez de Arellano, "Rebelión de Fuente Obejuna contra el Comendador Mayor de Calatrava Fernánd Gómez de Guzmán," Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia, Vol. XXXIX, 1901, pp. 446-512, and Claude E. Anibal, "The historical elements of Lope de Vega's Fuenteovejuna," PMLA, XLIX, 1934, pp. 657-718. These two articles provide near-conclusive evidence that Lope used the account of the incident given by Rades y Andrade, and that this account is very different from the historical truth revealed in documentary sources.

as Fuenteovejuna's. However, it is commonly admitted that natural liberty must have some degree of protection for ordinary mortals, who need help, in the shape of just law, for both guidance and protection, if that liberty is not to be placed in jeopardy: that is what the theorists mean when they refer to the tyrant's contempt for the liberty of his subjects.

As an illustration of that, consider Laurencia, whose acceptance of the laws which bind her to her station in life, manifest in her statement of the vida aldeana (I, 217-244), suggests that she employs her natural liberty properly, but whose denial of human love and rejection of all men is a denial of part of these laws, and, as such, a deviation from her natural liberty, an obstacle caused by an outside influence, the Comendador. The Comendador thus circumscribes her freedom of choice, in that he causes a lessening of her ability to use her reason, to the effect that her rejection of the Comendador temporarily brings about her rejection of Frondoso, although both men are entirely different. Even in this matter, Lope reminds us of the part language plays in confusing issues: the King refers to the Comendador's behaviour as demasías ("remediad sus demasías," [I, 708]) only a few moments before Laurencia calls Frondoso's advances demasías ("tus demasías/ que murmura el pueblo todo,"

I, 726-7); although the two contexts are entirely different, the same word is applied to both. There is, in all of this, the usual deceptive element of truth in the Comendador's words to Laurencia: "Vienes a ser un monstruo," (I, 789), the truth being, that the Comendador's behaviour has partly obscured her ability to recognise the vast differences between the superficial similarities of Frondoso and the Comendador.

This confusion of Laurencia's is rectified by Frondoso's courage, so that later, in the scene showing their betrothal, she joins Frondoso in a free and lawful act of mutual acceptance, in which liberty is seen in the harmonious relationship of the various levels of the laws they accept. Freely choosing each other, Laurencia and Frondoso demonstrate their respect for, and obligation to, society, and their deference to natural and divine laws; such willing obedience to just and harmonious laws constitutes natural liberty. It is supervised by the father of Laurencia, who is also the village <u>alcalde</u>, representing the kind of authority which protects these laws, and forming a vital link in the chain connecting daughter with father, <u>alcalde</u>, King, and God. For a moment, order reigns, natural liberty seems to mean something, and implicit in the arrangement is the possibility of moral liberty, the permanent inclination of the will towards

God.

The audience knows, of course, that this harmonious state of affairs will not easily survive, for although the regidor's remark

> Ya a los Católicos Reyes,
> que este nombre les dan ya,
> presto España les dará
> la obediencia de sus leyes, (II, 465-8)

affirmed the existence of the ideal chain and corresponding liberty, we watched, only minutes before, the awful scene of the abuse of Mengo and Jacinta; the faulty link in the chain, the Comendador, is a menace to the fragile structure of liberty we see established here. Soon, that liberty is shattered, by the imprisonment of Frondoso and the twisting out of shape, once more, of Laurencia's natural order. Both Frondoso and Laurencia eventually break the laws of all levels of justice, resorting to uncontrolled savagery, and, temporarily at least, perverting and denying their natural liberty; by that time, all the other villagers are reduced to similar behaviour.

This brings us to a crucial point, namely, that, because of the interdependence of liberty on various levels of human society, the villagers' liberty is obscured as a result of the loss of liberty in the Comendador himself. Much has been said about the freedom of the peasants being lost and regained, but it is the Comendador who is the farthest removed

of all from human liberty. The confusion of his reason and his surrender to passion may usefully be examined in this light.

The regidor from Ciudad Real tells the King, early in the play, that

> Allí, con más libertad
> de la que decir podemos,
> tiene a los súbditos suyos
> a todo contento ajenos. (I, 690-3)

There is no need to enumerate all the actions by which the Comendador demonstrates his libertad[22] in social and political activities, but, if language betrays the quality of a man's reasoning process, it is appropriate to consider the way in which the Comendador's loss of natural liberty is made apparent via the language he uses.

Our immediate impression of the Comendador, to be gained from the first scene of the play, is that of a man who attaches great importance to words, while misunderstanding or misusing their import: he talks of cortesía and is incensed by the Maestre's apparent lack of it, but reveals that, for him, cortesía is only a political device:

> Es llave la cortesía
> para abrir la voluntad;

[22]The word libertad means license here, as it often does; cf. the King's order to Manrique, "remediad sus demasías," and Manrique's reply, "Pondré límite a su exceso" (I, 708 and 718).

y para la enemistad
la necia descortesía. (I, 13-16)

He himself, meanwhile, offers only gross discourtesy, made unpleasantly obvious in the following conversation with the Maestre, in which we see how dangerous the Comendador can be when he deliberately perverts language to sway others and subvert their will. Far more dangerous, however is the way in which the Comendador's language confuses himself, a phenomenon we see constantly throughout the play.

The discourses of Frondoso and Laurencia on courtly language (I, 290-347) suggest to us how words may be used to corrupt their referents, preparing us for indications of how behaviour can be conditioned by such distortion. When the Comendador enters, brusquely accepts the peasants' homage, and repays them by chasing their daughters, we begin to see the self-deception of his language: the (to him) self-evident truth of "¿Mías no sois?" (I, 602) leads to his question, "¿Qué reparan/ en no hacer lo que les digo?" (I, 609-610). Because the peasants are "his" in an administrative or economic sense, he cannot see why they are not "his" in a moral or physical sense: his words assume a whole truth where there is only a half-truth, and he fails to understand the distinction which Pascuala makes in reply: "Sí, señor;/ mas no para casos tales," (I, 602-3). The words the Comendador uses here - and in many other instances - are symptomatic of, and instrumental

in, the confusion of his reason which perverts his natural liberty.

The Comendador is conscious of no ambiguities, and his behaviour reflects the confusion of his language. It could be suggested that he is aware of the equivocations and consciously uses them to try to bamboozle the peasants, but this possibility seems to be belied by his fury when worsted by the peasants in an argument over these very equivocations (II, 80-163), fury which does not disappear when the villagers do. The argument begins with the Comendador confused by his own metaphor:

> Quisiera en esta ocasión
> que le hiciérades pariente
> a una liebre que por pies,
> por momentos se me va. (II, 98-101)

The hare he refers to is Laurencia. By equating hare-coursing with girl-chasing he implies that the latter is, like the former, a noble pursuit; in so doing, he ignores the fundamental difference between men and beasts, viz., the power of rational choice in the former; in effect, that denies the natural liberty of all men.

I have already mentioned the exchange concerning honor (II, 117-150) which occurs in the same scene, with the Comendador again refusing to see more than a single meaning for a single word. The Comendador's honor refers only to

social status, which the villagers clearly do not have:

> ¿Vosotros honor tenéis?
> ¡Qué freiles de Calatrava! (II, 128-9)

other concepts of honour, such as moral integrity (the highest form of honour), mean nothing to him. In his eyes, therefore, the peasant girls can only gain honour from his attentions - "vuestras mujeres se honran" (II, 137). The one word conveniently confuses the issue, and the Comendador's behaviour follows suit. The same mental simplicity fastens on the concept of purity of blood: his is socially or genealogically pure, theirs is not, therefore they lose nothing by mixing theirs with his - "Y ¿ensúciola yo juntando/ la mía a la vuestra?" (II, 133-134); the introduction of a contradictory moral factor - "Cuando/ que el mal más tiñe que alimpia" (II, 134-135) - which suggests that his socially pure blood may be a moral impurity which stains, reveals his own equivocation and reduces him to blundering confusion.

The implications of the perversions of language, described earlier, are shown in action in these and other scenes, with the Comendador going to both extremes, praising promiscuity and insulting chastity. He is trapped and misled by his own language, encouraging himself to submit to the clutches of sensual self-indulgence; the symptom aggravates the disease, the disease being the breakdown of reason. That

it is not deliberate is confirmed in the scene following the one referred to above: the Comendador asks his men, "Estos, ¿se igualan conmigo?" (II, 168), an affirmation of social criteria, at the expense of moral criteria, which even Flores feels bound to correct, "Que no es aqueso igualarse" (II, 164).

What is apparent in all this chaos, surrounding and stemming from the Comendador, is the interdependence of the concepts of liberty, law and language. Lope presents the Comendador as a man in whom disorder, brought about by the dominance of the passions over the reason, is compounded by the failings of his reason itself, befuddled as it is by his careless distortion of language. On two counts, therefore, the Comendador's natural liberty is nullified. The ramifications for the villagers have already been indicated in the discussion of tyranny, above: the Comendador is, effectively, the man whose legal authority they must accept; obedience to his law, far from assuring their natural liberty, would (and, in some cases, does) represent a perversion of liberty. When the villagers challenge the Comendador on rational grounds (in the arrest-scene and in the scene just mentioned), the Comendador can only reply by insulting and humiliating them, so that even overt attempts to re-introduce some semblance of reason into the Comendador's influence over their affairs are doomed to failure. The Comendador twists language and law in

his attempts to defend himself, and the villagers, who, like most people, need the guidance of law for the proper use of their liberty, are denied it. Although they could, theoretically, maintain their liberty by adhering, against all the odds, to the moral law, the practical effect of the situation is that, even as they try to resist the Comendador's perversions, they are - because they are normal, weak and confused men and women - being driven by him to the point where passions can no longer be contained by reason.

It is generally assumed that, by the end of the play, the villagers have regained their liberty. It is worth examining the ending of the play closely to see to what extent that is true.

The first thing to be said is, that the villagers do not regain liberty via the massacre of the Comendador, for reasons already given: neither natural nor moral liberty is to be found in the tyranny of mob savagery. The only possible sense in which the death of the Comendador assists them in their natural liberty, or brings them closer to moral liberty, is that the way is thereby cleared for the Reyes Católicos to impose just civil law for their guidance in these matters. To discover whether Lope wants to leave such an impression, we need to explore his presentation of the King's attitude to, and relationship with, the villagers.

In the past, some critics[23] have been at a loss to understand just why Lope shows Ferdinand and Isabela as being anxious to punish the villagers who seem so justified in their rebellion (apart from the fact that it is mentioned in the Rades source). But Lope knows that the revolt, because of its very nature, could not be presented as being unequivocally approved, especially by the King; for the uprising represents and reflects the same kind of anarchical disorder of which the Comendador was guilty. Indeed, Lope has pointedly altered his Rades material in order to emphasise the monarchs' desire to punish the villagers. According to Rades, when the pesquisidor returned from Fuenteovejuna with insufficient evidence to apportion blame and punishment, "sus Altezas siendo informados de las tyranias del Comendador mayor, por las quales avia merescido la muerte, mandaron se quedasse el negocio sin mas averiguacion;"[24] but, in the play, the situation in Fuenteovejuna is made clear to the King long before the massacre, in the first act:

REY — ¿Dónde queda Fernán Gómez?

REGIDOR 1° — En Fuenteovejuna creo,
por ser su villa,
y tener en ella casa y asiento.
Allí, con más libertad

[23] e.g., Anibal, op. cit.

[24] op. cit., folio 80, col. A.

de la que decir podemos,
tiene a los súbditos suyos
a todo contento ajenos. (I, 690-693)

Before sending the judge, therefore, the monarchs knew that there were many reasons for the villagers' madness. That makes no difference to the sending of the judge, for civil law must be seen to apply to everyone, but it does make a difference to the events surrounding the return of the judge, because, in the play, the King does not pardon the villagers out of sympathy for their plight (as Rades suggests), about which he already knows, but says that he is forced to pardon them for lack of formal evidence, even though he still strongly disapproves of the crime:

Pues no puede averiguarse
el suceso por escrito,
aunque fué grave el delito,
por fuerza ha de perdonarse. (III, 791-4)

The point that Lope must have been aware of is that the King must show that such rebellions just cannot be tolerated, for, however justifiable they might be, they represent disrespect to authority; the King is the highest authority in the land: he, of all people, cannot permit, by condoning insurrection, the establishing of a totally unacceptable precedent. The King's words, on hearing of the massacre, leave no doubt on that score:

Estar puedes confiado
que sin castigo no queden.

El triste suceso ha sido
tal, que admirado me tiene,
y que vaya luego un juez
que lo averigüe conviene,
y castigue a los culpados
para ejemplo de las gentes.
Vaya un capitán con él,
porque seguridad lleve;
que tan grande atrevimiento
castigo ejemplar requiere. (III, 363-374)

By the end of the play, therefore, the King has done two things for the villagers: he has tortured them, and he has pardoned them. We can only regard these as two markedly diverse procedures - yet both are justified by the requirements of human law! To uphold the law, the King must seek to ascertain where the guilt lies, and, to uphold the law, he must drop the charges when baulked by lack of evidence. That such contradictory measures are both mandatory under the aegis of human law must invite us to question the quality of justice dispensed by the latter, and it is not Lope's only reminder of the ambivalence inherent in human law even when it is dispensed by monarchs whom Lope's contemporaries regarded with nostalgic admiration. For example, it is noticeable (Lope has him say it twice) that the King's reasons for punishing the villagers - "para ejemplo de las gentes," "... que tan grande atrevimiento/ castigo ejemplar requiere" (III, 370 and 373-4) - are exactly the same as the Comendador's reasons for arresting and punishing Frondoso: "... es importante/ para el

ejemplo, el castigo" (II, 738-9).

The point is not, that the King is as much a tyrant as the Comendador - clearly, he is not - but that human law and its wording can be made to <u>seem</u> either just or unjust, so that the King is as susceptible of misinterpretation, and therefore as capable of ambiguity, as the Comendador. Furthermore, if human law is hampered by its language, so also by its methods. While acknowledging that torture was an accepted judicial method in Lope's day, there is nothing to stop a seventeenth-century audience wondering how much difference there is between, on the one hand, the torturing of every man, woman and child in the village - to which Lope devotes quite a bit of stage-time - and, on the other hand, the savagery of the villagers against the Comendador, or of the latter against the former, or of the Maestre against Ciudad Real.

Added to the linguistic and procedural limitations, which render the royal justice less than perfect, are the compromises made necessary by the force of circumstance. That circumstances do not permit even an efficient King such as Ferdinand to be constantly aware of what is going on is pointed out at the beginning of Act III, where Barrildo doubts the King's ability to help the villagers ("... no

podrá, ocupado,/ hacernos bien ..." [31-2]).[25] That political circumstances necessitate compromise in the pursuit of justice is suggested by the way Lope presents the King's pardon for the villagers, and especially in the setting of the King's attitude to the villagers side-by-side with his attitude to the Maestre: it is all very well to say that, since the villagers are pardoned, order has been restored, the rebellion vindicated, happiness assured, monarchy glorified, peasant dignity acknowledged, and so on, but, while the King agrees to overlook the crimes of the villagers, he is also prepared to overlook the crimes of the Maestre, even though the latter are more obviously treasonable. The Maestre is, to be sure, utterly humiliated by the King, who ignores his excuses, disdains his interruptions, and assumes his functions; the Maestre's treason, though, is still a capital crime, and the King, had he deemed it necessary, might well have found ways of circumventing the papal protection of the Order and had the Maestre executed. Lope, via Manrique's indulgent remark - "... aunque es en edad pequeño,/ es valeroso soldado" (III, 657-8) - seems

[25]It is interesting to note that another version of the historical event, Palencia's, notes that the King's failure to punish the villagers was due to "los innumerables apuros de aquellos días," and to the complex political circumstances. V. Crónica de Enrique IV escrita en Latín por Alonso de Palencia, translated by D. A. Paz y Melia, in Colección de Escritores Castellanos, Historiadores, CXXXIV, Tomo IV, Libro XXVI, Cap. IV, p. 203.

to indicate that a degree of royal leniency is being exercised.

This comparatively generous treatment (compared, that is, with death for high treason) of the Maestre is usually regarded as Lope's affirmation of the need for intermediate authority. That seems, dramatically anyway, a weak argument. In the drama, the King seems to be surrounded with "good men and true", such as Manrique and the Conde de Cabra; if the King does need weak, vacillating and corruptible adolescents for his intermediate authority, the prospects for stability are scarcely better than they were before. More revealing is the policy of the historical Ferdinand, who did indeed retain the Maestre's services, but who also eventually took over the leadership of all three great military orders. It is thus difficult to reconcile the need for intermediate authority with either Lope's presentation of the events or with what he knew of the history; to see why Lope shows this retention of the Maestre's services, I think we must look for dramatic reasons.

When we consider the dramatic parallels between the villagers and the Maestre, we must begin to wonder what is meant by the closing aspects of the play's structure. Both the Maestre and the villagers are corrupted by the Comendador; both are driven to violence by the Comendador - in the Maestre's case, a man savages a town, while in the villagers' case, a

town savages a man; both are, thereby, strictly speaking, guilty of disrupting the whole social and political structure of the state, and therefore both are arguably guilty of treason against a King renowned for his law-and-order campaigns; both come to realise that they had better make it up to the King, both go to the King's court to confess their guilt (blaming it on the Comendador), pledge their allegiance, and ask for pardon, and both are accorded a grudging pardon by the King. These last events take place in successive scenes at the end of Act III.

If the structure of the work is as important as is generally agreed, Lope seems to be drawing our attention to something other than the unity of King and people. Historically, we know that the King's pardoning of the villagers was an act dictated by calculation and expediency; Lope, while not (it is presumed) aware of the historical data revealed by Ramírez y Arellano, nevertheless seems to sense that the King was partly motivated by expediency, and to suggest it in his play. The clearest indication of that is to be seen in the way Lope alters his sources. One alteration - perhaps the most significant - I have already mentioned: the changing of the Rades intimation that the monarchs discovered the Comendador's tyranny after the massacre, to the play's showing them as being informed of it before the massacre and subsequent

judicial enquiry. Other alterations are apparent in the final scene of the play, the whole of which is an addition by Lope to the material offered by Rades, according to whom, no such meeting between King and peasants took place. The final scene is composed almost entirely of the villagers' avowal of their allegiance to the King, one effect of which is that the necessity for the King to exact exemplary punishment is considerably reduced, because the villagers plainly do not harbour designs which could be construed as laesa majestas, and because their submission is as exemplary as their prospective punishment. That leads to another hint of the King's expediency:

> Y la villa es bien se quede
> en mí, pues de mí se vale,
> hasta ver si acaso sale
> comendador que la herede. (III, 795-8)

He takes charge of the town, suggesting that this is a temporary arrangement. But the historical Ferdinand made himself Grand Master of the Order of Calatrava only eleven years after the uprising in Fuenteovejuna, and those of Lope's audience who were aware of that (with greater or lesser accuracy) could hardly fail to interpret the stage-King's pronouncement as the seizing of an opportunity to reduce the power of the order. They might even wonder what exactly is meant by Frondoso's words, "Su majestad habla, en fin,/ como quien tanto ha acertado" (III, 799-800).

Taking all these matters, dramatic and historical, into account, it seems appropriate to infer that Lope is inviting us to see the King as being conscious of the political advantage to be gained from the judgements he makes concerning the incident. If we were only shown the King's pardon for the villagers, we might more readily regard it as tacit approval of, and sympathy for, their action; but since we see it in conjunction with the King's pardon for the Maestre, who is much more difficult to exculpate, we are forced to realise that the King's motives are less than sentimental. In short, he lets off lightly both Maestre and villagers, for a mixture of motives: because it serves his purpose better, because of the other claims on his attention, and because, in the case of the villagers, justice is marginally better served - but on procedural grounds rather than as exoneration.

In pointing out that the King may be seen to have his own reasons for treating the villagers with magnanimity, I am not imputing to him expediency in a pejorative sense, nor am I suggesting that Lope would have done so (one can only speculate about Lope's reaction to Machiavelli's admiration of Ferdinand, expressed in Chapter XXI of Il Principe). The King is faced with a real problem, on which depends not just his own advantage, but the advantage of the whole nation, whose prospects for stability are inextricably bound up with

the prudence or imprudence of the King's policies. In fact, the nation's fortunes are virtually inseparable from the fortunes of the Reyes Católicos - or, pace Henry Ford, what's good for Ferdinand is good for Spain. Faced with such a problem, the King has to take account of, on the one hand, the demands of law and justice, which he himself is sparing no effort to impose upon Spain, and, on the other hand, the pressures and circumstances and hazards of political activity, which have to be weighed, measured and countered if law and justice are to be successfully established. It is a matter of balancing advantages and disadvantages, of compromising between the demands of the one hand and the demands of the other, and it cannot be easy.

The important issue being illustrated in the play, à propos of these political considerations, is that no matter how good, whether in intention or effect, a ruler may be, he is still subject to the difficulties and limitations inherent in human law and human politics. These difficulties may range from the obvious inability of a ruler to be watching over everything and everybody (each appearance of the monarchs is set in a different place, as if to emphasise the incessant distractions), through the deficiencies of human witness (such as Flores' account of the massacre - hardly an impartial report, but the only one the monarchs ever get), to the eternal

problem of finding the right balance between absolute standards of morality, the practical application of human law, and the maintenance of political stability.

The above examination of Lope's presentation of the King's behaviour arose from a desire to ascertain the extent to which the villagers gain liberty after the death of the Comendador. What may we conclude?

The villagers may be said to seek their natural liberty in the only way open to them, that is, by voluntarily submitting to just law, which they do in the closing scene of the play. As I said earlier, that is the only sense in which they may find a greater liberty. Yet, while it is certain that the new order imposed by the Reyes Católicos does offer just such an opportunity for the natural liberty of their subjects, in that it provides the coherent civil justice - hitherto lacking - necessary for the guidance and protection of their natural liberty, an audience may see that the law which offers this greater liberty is by no means close to being the rational and reliable touchstone which natural liberty requires. A spectator, seeing the fragility of the order, and the qualifications and ambiguities of the King's justice, must conclude that the liberty attained by the villagers is still, in the practical sense, in danger of being somewhat circumscribed.

Frondoso, in his valediction, calls his audience a "discreto senado" (III, 801) - a sharp little dig, since, on his first appearance, Frondoso told us all about the vocabulary of flattery prevalent in the city - but one which appeals to our pretensions to being judges of what goes on around us. A seventeenth-century man, if he were to reflect on this problem of liberty in Fuenteovejuna, might consider a further point. The Reyes Católicos were venerated for uniting the nation under the rule of just law; obedience to their law should, one would think, be the best way of assuring natural liberty that one could ask for. Although the play shows that, even under the Reyes Católicos, law and liberty were less than perfect, that was, nevertheless, the "good old days;" but those "good old days" were a very long time ago - about 140 years - since when the unifying and constructive movements visible in Lope's dramatic re-creation have degenerated into the destructive, fragmenting tendencies of the seventeenth century. If natural liberty was fragile in the reign of the Reyes Católicos, what meaning can it have in the reign of Philip III - or of anyone else? For Lope's contemporaries, such comparisons can hardly have been reassuring.[26]

[26] It was, after all, only a few years before the play was written that Cabrera had noted in a relación: "Habrá 15 días

que amanecieron en la Puerta de Palacio, en la de Guadalajara, en la de la cárcel Real y del Sol, ciertos papeles a modo de libello o pasquín con tales o semejantes palabras, provocando a los pueblos que despertasen, porque un privado tirano que gobernaba, tenía al Rey y Reino en último punto." Relación dated Aug. 2, 1608, in Relaciones de las Cosas Sucedidas ...

Chapter II

Lope de Vega's EL MEJOR ALCALDE, EL REY

As their titles might suggest, Lope's El Mejor Alcalde, el Rey, and Calderón's El Alcalde de Zalamea, the latter to be studied in the next chapter, have in common an examination of certain aspects of human justice. In telling us something about justice, El Mejor Alcalde, el Rey tells us, as does El Alcalde de Zalamea, something about liberty, offering a picture of human justice in its entirety, from King to peasant, and of the problems of obedience and servitude within the unity of the theoretical system. To begin with, remembering that liberty entails voluntary obedience to just law, I propose to examine the way in which Lope sets the idea of obedience in a realistic context, showing how far an impeccable theory does and does not work in an imperfect practice. Having done that, I shall try to show this whole problem set within the problems (as the play presents them) of the entire state and its order.

The first lines of the play (vv. 1-30)[1] are a

[1]Edition used: Lope de Vega, Comedias, I, "Clásicos Castellanos," (Madrid, 1960).

description of natural justice and love couched in idyllic terms. The swain (Sancho), addressing the natural beauty of the Galician flora and fauna, asks, rhetorically, if there could be a greater love than his; there cannot, of course - he maintains - because the intensity of his love corresponds with the quality of Elvira's beauty, which could not possibly be surpassed, even by Elvira. The traditional correspondences between nature, beauty and love are thereby established, as a background against which the action which follows is to take place.

However, when that description ends, Lope takes us from the dream-world of pastoral happiness, which we might have been anticipating, to the "real" world of human behaviour and its consequences. This is not to suggest that, because Lope knows that such a world does not exist, he is deflating the notion; rather, it seems to be a fleeting suggestion of the kind of happiness which men can imagine but never attain, a happiness consisting in life lived according to its criteria; once presented, these criteria of natural justice remain as a backdrop against which are played out the difficulties and deficiencies of human beings. On this occasion, the humans are those who comprise the peasant society, but the same pattern is repeated when we are introduced to other levels of society, notably that of the local gentry and that of the

monarch and Court; for what we see in this play is, not the difficulties of "goodies" struggling against the deficiencies of "baddies," but the conscious and unconscious distortion of truth by all men. It thus transpires that we do not have to wait for Don Tello's aberrations to see how men's limitations pervert the order they themselves construct and approve; in fact, the very first scenes give us an indication of how and why that happens.

When Sancho and Elvira are teasing each other and going through the motions of courtship, it is all very light-hearted and harmless; but what is noticeable is that, the previous evening, Sancho, in order to catch a glimpse of his beloved, was hiding behind a tree ("Yo, detrás destos castaños,/ te miraba, con temor," [45-6]), while Elvira, realising this, was irritated ("Que me enojé cuando vi/ que entre las aguas me vió." [69-70]); and that Elvira fancies Sancho while pretending otherwise - she wants to see him ("Por aquí Sancho bajaba,/ o me ha burlado el deseo." [61-2]), but pretends she is looking instead for some lost <u>corales</u> ("¿Has hallado unos corales/ que en esta margen perdí?" [75-6]); and that Sancho realises that Elvira has accepted him only when she finally tells him that women often say the opposite of what they mean:

> Sancho, pues tan cuerdo eres,
> advierte que las mujeres

hablamos cuando callamos,
concedemos si negamos:
por esto, y por lo que ves,
nunca crédito nos des,
ni crueles ni amorosas;
porque todas nuestras cosas
se han de entender al revés. (102-10)

That is all absolutely understandable, blameless, and comically familiar, but we still cannot avoid realising that this essentially simple, basic, and benevolent human activity is dependent upon - or made, by humans, to seem dependent upon - concealment, secrecy, dissimulation, and even lies. At the end of the scene, Nuño approaches and Sancho and Elvira decide that this is the moment to ask his permission to marry. It quickly transpires that Nuño is delighted (he does not even bother to say "yes"), but, while Sancho is putting the question, Elvira hides behind a tree ("El suceso espero/ detrás de aquel olmo." [117-8]) and tells Sancho, "... no digas que yo quiero" (116). So we already see, in the relationships between two lovers and a kindly father, the suitor hiding and his beloved concealing the truth, and the beloved hiding while the suitor conceals the truth from her father ("De mi amor pagada,/ me dió licencia para hablarte ahora." [184-5]).

Now, we might not pay much serious attention to all of this; after all, two queasy moments in anyone's life are 1. asking the girl, and 2. asking her father, while from a

detached viewpoint both occasions are usually rather comical, and must seem so to the audience in this instance. Nevertheless, Lope chooses to present it in considerable detail (the play could have begun at, say, v. 154, [NUÑO. "Sancho, ¿tú estabas aquí?"] with no loss to plot or exposition). Furthermore, he does not change the subject once Nuño has given his permission, but rather, he forces us to notice it: for in the following scene, when Sancho and Elvira are again alone together, they return to their lovers' lies and lovers' cruelty (231 ff; Sancho lies even as he admits the "truth", cf. v. 252 "dijo mil veces que sí." - Nuño did not say "sí" once, let alone a thousand times. A trivial point, of course, but on such trivial points do serious crimes and serious punishments depend, later in the play). Why do they behave in this way? Vanity, perhaps, or a kind of instant catharsis - the creation of tension and the pleasure of its relief; at any rate, we all do this, and in a similarly jocular fashion. But the joke may not always be funny, and it is Elvira who draws our attention to the notion which, in context, if we have not been noticing what is happening, is surprising: "amor todo es venganzas" (270). This, she says, is a lesson she has learned from the preceding events which we have just witnessed; so we have been warned, and are invited to realise what has happened as well as just to laugh at it. Only after

all this, then, do the lovers finally admit the truth to each other - "SANCHO. Luego, ¿ya soy tu marido?/ ELVIRA. ¿No dices que está tratado?" (271-2) - yet Sancho's parting comment as the scene changes is, "me ha enseñado el amor/ a tener entendimiento" (301-2).

During these opening scenes, we not only find out the extent to which Sancho and Elvira innocently distort matters, but also something more obvious, that is, how easy it is for other people to come between them and their legitimate and orderly goals. This happens during the scene showing Sancho trying to get Nuño's consent, when Pelayo, although <u>without</u> malice, constantly gets in Sancho's way and renders farcical and difficult a task which we might have expected to be serious and straightforward. Ideally, Sancho's little speech (contained in 157-9, 166-9, 175 and 178) ought to be sufficient to clear up the business in a few seconds, but in practice he is repeatedly baulked by Pelayo. At first sight, it might seem as if this were a visual representation of the theme of the play - Pelayo, the <u>gracioso</u> who cannot speak properly and sees sex in every remark (and is therefore, we complacently assume, perhaps, intellectually disordered), comes between Sancho and his heart's desire by his crude affirmation of lust. However, we might notice that Pelayo, with his crude jokes and lustful assumptions, is <u>nearer</u> to

the truth of the matter in hand (marriage) than is Sancho: Pelayo sees marriage for what it really is - the divine and human blessing on the act of procreation (cf. "fuera en tu casa yo más importante,/ porque te diera cada mes un nieto." 229-30), and a struggle for material security:

> Con cuatro o seis cochinos que toviera,
> que éstos parieran otros, en seis años
> pudiera yo labrar una cochera. (190-2)

Nuño's blessing at the end of the scene, "Pues el cielo,/ Sancho, tu vida y sucesión aumente." (222-3), is only what Pelayo has been saying all along. In addition, Pelayo's remarks are pointing to the truth in another sense, for he is, to begin with, only doing what Sancho also has to do, viz., interpreting Elvira's language; that he interprets it wrongly is as much a joke on Sancho and Elvira as it is on Pelayo. All through the scene, then, Pelayo's absurdities are juxtaposed with Sancho's formalities, but in the scene just described it is Pelayo who offers more truth.

Summarising the flavour of these scenes, it seems that a simple truth like love is thus hidden by other factors, one of which is the nature of words themselves, which, apparently, can either conceal or reveal the truth, according to the intent of either the speaker or the listener, but which are ultimately dependent for the truth not on either of these, but on the context of their referents. (Thus, Sancho's

words "por Elvira me abraso y me consumo" [169] are an acceptable cliché in this context, as a part of natural justice and ordered society, but similar language uttered later by Don Tello cannot be so accepted.) The irony is, that the truth as suggested by Pelayo is rejected by Sancho and Nuño, who consistently tell him to keep quiet - from embarrassment, perhaps, or just irritation - and probably also by the spectators, who very likely see Pelayo as a "dirty old man," in the comic sense, who is frustrating a "nice young man" and his prospective father-in-law; so we, like Sancho and Nuño, do not like to hear the truth, but we are going to hear and see it whether we like it or not, and it may as well be pointed out at this juncture that Pelayo is frequently presented by Lope as a protagonist who can direct us towards the truth, a point to which I shall be referring again later.

The reason why all of that is relevant to the theme under examination may be found in the scene involving Nuño and Pelayo which is set between the scenes involving the two lovers. If, as suggested, the scenes between Sancho and Elvira show us the difficulties which human beings place in their own way in a game as simple as love, we might begin to reflect on the difficulties which beset them when they approach the far more complex and potentially dangerous

problems of finding, keeping, and protecting their place in society, where men's courage, honesty, and altruism are rarely as apparent as they are between lovers. This brings us to the problem of service and obedience, in which is involved the whole social structure of law on which liberty depends, and which is immediately brought to our attention as soon as Nuño appears (121 ff.). Nuño is berating Pelayo for his incompetence as a shepherd, and his first words are "Tú sirves de tal manera ..." (121). Pelayo, then, is Nuño's servant (but not his slave), and as such may well be free and happy by way of obedience to Nuño, IF Nuño is a good master whose commands are just; as much is suggested by Nuño's question, "¿Tienes algún descontento/ en mi casa?" (125-6); Pelayo says "yes", whereupon (although Pelayo's complaint proves to be a joke) Nuño replies, "Pues hoy tu servicio acabe,/ que el servir no es casamiento" (127-8). This comment of Nuño's indicates the liberty men may find in voluntary service to just law, and, indeed, Pelayo may, if he wishes, find a master whose law is more just than Nuño's, and thus find a greater liberty. However, although that is all very well in this mircocosm, these theories are not so easily effected on a wider social level, and that is to prove one of the central problems of the play; for, although Pelayo can easily change masters, Nuño cannot, neither can Sancho,

nor Elvira, nor hundreds and thousands of other people of greater or lesser importance who all happen to live in this particular state under this particular government. The society, as the spectator knows, is comprised of many complex relationships between many complex people; we have been watching, and will continue to watch, the difficulties surrounding one of the simpler relationships (love) between two or three of the (superficially) simpler people. Nuño's words may draw our attention to that: "el servir no es casamiento" (128 - just after we have watched two lovers having great difficulty arranging a marriage); the statement is true on the level of Pelayo's service to Nuño, but not on the level of, say, Sancho's to Don Tello, and that is where the problems begin, for, obviously, the difficulties surrounding much more complex relationships, such as obedience to just law, will be multiplied almost infinitely. Pelayo may find liberty through service to Nuño, but will he find it through service to Don Tello? Will Nuño? or Sancho? Will Don Tello - or any of them - find liberty through service to the King, on whose justice the whole structure ultimately depends?

The lovers are like everyone else: they do not live in a vacuum, and if we realise that Nuño's words to Pelayo are only relevant within certain limits, we should ponder the matter when Nuño addresses Sancho in exactly the same way,

"Tú sirves a don Tello" (193). At this point we are being drawn into the wider problems of putting theory into a wider practice. What Nuño says is theoretically quite right, and if Don Tello is a just man, obedience to him can therefore protect the liberty of Sancho and Elvira; Nuño is less concerned with formalities than with a dowry, thus eliciting a protest from Sancho ("Pésame que mi amor pongas en duda." [209]), but that is not important - Nuño is not trying to offend Sancho (or Don Tello), but merely offering the experience derived from a knowledge of the dietary shortcomings of the fruits of love. That Sancho should obey Nuño because of the latter's seniority is also quite just, as Sancho admits: "iré, pues tú lo mandas." (222), and also:

> dice Nuño que es razón,
> por ser mi dueño; en efeto,
> es viejo y hombre discreto
> y que merece opinión
> por ser tu padre también, (283-7)

and it is therefore an obedience which, since Nuño appears to be a sensible and law-abiding man, should bring liberty; (Sancho's "Yo voy de mala gana," [221], should not be taken too seriously - a few minutes later he tells Elvira, "Plega al cielo que me den/ él y su hermana mil cosas," [290-1] - but, nevertheless, he is again trying to avoid an unromantic truth, and, nota bene, this is all among friends). Everybody, it seems, is doing the right thing, and yet this very action

of going to see Don Tello is one of the immediate causes of the disaster. Sancho, placing his vida and alma in the hands of Elvira (who has just described love as venganzas), is now about to place himself in the hands of someone far less anxious for his welfare.

The difficulties of a system as delicate as the one we have been dealing with are thus presented in these opening scenes, and throughout the rest of the play the whole problem of obedience and just law, with all its implications for what human liberty means in practice, is put before us. Thus it transpires that Sancho, for all the right reasons, presents himself to his superior, and, as a consequence, finds himself in a situation not unlike that of Peribáñez, who also went to present himself to his master, but for all the wrong reasons. When we begin to wonder how this can happen in Sancho's case, we ought to continually bear in mind that the principle of obedience as the basis of justice and liberty lays a great onus on both superiors and inferiors, but particularly on superiors, for obvious reasons. Therefore we have to examine the concepts of justice and liberty within Don Tello, which I shall now do, while at the same time examining associated problems within the context.

Oddly enough in view of later events, Don Tello at first appears to be what modern criticism calls a "sympathetic

character." From his first appearance until he arrives at the wedding he seems to be a model of decorum. He behaves as a noble should, indulges in correctly noble pursuits, is courteous to his family, affable to his servants, and extremely civil and generous towards Sancho. However, just as the idyllic flavour of the first peasant scene soon disappeared, so also within this harmonious picture of aristocracy do faint suggestions of difficulty make themselves apparent, when, for instance, the subject of Don Tello's marital status crops up (360-72). For we are told that Don Tello, stuck out here in the backwoods, is himself something of a prisoner of the social structure: "El ser aquí poderoso/ no me da tan cerca igual," (363-4) - he cannot get married (or so he says) because, being the top man in this peripheral area, there is no-one of equal status with whom to make a match. Feliciana, at this point, makes the interesting comment that there would be nothing wrong with marrying a nice girl of lower status - a comment which becomes relevant again later in the play - which Don Tello laughs off with the suggestion that Feliciana has an ulterior motive:

FELICIANA. No os estaba aquí tan mal
de algún señor generoso
la hija.

D. TELLO. Pienso que quieres
reprehender no haber pensado
en casarte, que es cuidado
que nace con las mujeres. (365-70)

This little exchange offers three interesting points. One is, that Don Tello asserts his obedience to a certain social law, while Feliciana denies the importance of said law; there are, then, two sides to this briefly-mentioned topic, and later it becomes critical. Whether or not this law is just, and whether or not denial of it is consequently a deprivation of Don Tello's liberty, is immaterial: he thinks he should conform, and that is what matters, and, given his attitude, we may feel that Don Tello's station in life places restrictions on him with which most normal men would find it difficult to live for any great length of time. These restrictions may be a part of Don Tello's liberty, but, in practice, what ensues is the destruction of liberty. The second point is, that in his reply to Feliciana, Don Tello ducks the question and (albeit in a casually jocular manner) <u>suspects</u> Feliciana of being equivocal; just as Sancho and Elvira's world was shown to be less than idyllic, so Don Tello's world of harmony is shown to offer its difficulties - difficulties similar to those of the peasant world. That brings us to the third point, which is that immediately following this hint of truth about Don Tello's world, Sancho and Pelayo enter.

Thus, by the time both sides are brought face to face, we have been given several indications of, not just the

difficulties themselves, but of the continual presence of the difficulties involved in these social relationships, especially of those which depend on the ability of fallible men to hold fast to truth and justice. These difficulties were apparent even between Sancho and Nuño, and between Sancho and Elvira, and now we have a situation where a vital relationship between a superior and an inferior is a relationship devoid of such intimacy as the peasants enjoy between themselves. Don Tello and Sancho know each other by sight: that is all. In the play we are reminded that the social distance between families such as Don Tello's, and families such as Sancho's and Nuño's, is greater than it was. Whereas Nuño, as Sancho tells Don Tello, could once lay claim to some status,

> ... que aun tiene paveses
> en las ya borradas armas
> de su portal, y con ellas,
> de aquel tiempo, algunas lanzas, (419-22)

Sancho is just one of over a hundred people dependent on Don Tello:

> Pobre soy, y en este oficio
> que os he dicho, cosa es clara
> que no me conoceréis,
> porque los criados pasan
> de ciento y treinta personas
> que vuestra ración aguardan
> y vuestro salario esperan. (391-97)

The main difference between a vanished past and a less comfortable present is that, nowadays, people such as Sancho and Nuño

serve a master:

> ... fué mi padre
> hombre de bien, que pasaba
> sin servir. (411-13)

Clearly, that change in the relationship between the superior and the inferior is significant. Theoretically, there is no reason why a man should be considered less free when serving a master than he would be otherwise, provided the master's law is just. But in the proviso lies the problem: the peasants' law and liberty now depend on Don Tello, and this dependence is an important aspect of the plot. Human liberty requires voluntary obedience and co-operation; however, that obedience is, in one sense, less than voluntary, as Pelayo's joke suggests at the end of the scene:

> Todos guardamos, señora,
> lo que ...
> ... nos mandan
> nuestros padres que guardemos. (497-99)

That is irrelevant if the superior's law is just, for divine law ordains the station to which a man is born. But the joke is emphasising the fact that Pelayo and Don Tello have much in common despite their difference in station, in that Don Tello has inherited his high estate just as Pelayo has inherited his low estate; it may be questioned, therefore, whether one man's law, as it pertains to social and civil matters, is likely to be worthy of any greater respect than

another's. The nub of the problem seems to be, though, how can these intricate relationships work, when even simple relationships present such problems?

It should be pointed out that, while Don Tello has so far fulfilled satisfactorily his obligations towards his subordinates, and has ruled out romantic relationships with girls of inferior rank, Sancho - albeit only for harmless snobbery or simple pride, - has repeatedly told Don Tello that he, Nuño and Elvira, are almost as "good" (meaning "as noble") as Don Tello, e.g.,

> Pero en Galicia, señores,
> es la gente tan hidalga,
> que sólo en servir, al rico
> el que es pobre no le iguala, (387-90)

> He tratado de casarme
> con una doncella honrada,
> hija de Nuño de Aibar,
> hombre que sus campos labra,
> pero que aun tiene paveses
> en las ya borradas armas
> de su portal, y con ellas,
> de aquel tiempo, algunas lanzas. (415-22)

If Don Tello wanted to take this seriously, he could see it as a reduction of his obligation; it would only be so in word rather than deed, and of course would not justify abduction and rape, but the words at any rate are spoken, and words can, often if not always, serve to obscure the distinctions of truth. Lope seems to be drawing our attention to this <u>via</u> the comments of Pelayo, who, as suggested before, often points

to the truth in the situations presented. Thus, when Don Tello describes the honours, material and otherwise, that he proposes to bestow on Sancho, Sancho understandably voices admiration of his benefactor, while Pelayo inverts everything Sancho says:

SANCHO. ¡Tanta merced!
PELAYO. ¡Merced tanta!
SANCHO. ¡Tan grande bien!
PELAYO. ¡Bien tan grande!
SANCHO. ¡Rara virtud!
PELAYO. ¡Virtud rara!
SANCHO. ¡Alto valor!
PELAYO. ¡Valor alto!
SANCHO. ¡Santa piedad!
PELAYO. ¡Piedad santa! (446-50)

These inversions do not change the meanings of the words, obviously, but they put into our minds the idea of dichotomy and ambivalence, and Pelayo even hints that that is his intention "Soy el que dice al revés/ todas las cosas que habra," (453-4); the fact that (in this case) reversal does not change the meaning of the words is in itself an indication of the vagueness of language, and later we find that the kind of munificence Sancho applauds at this point can, in another context, become totally sinister (cf. "Prométela plata y oro,/ joyas y cuanto quisieres... [etc.]" 1277-88). But what is the danger in this instance? Knowing the play, we naturally have to say that Don Tello's honouring of Sancho's wedding turns out to be a curse; but, beyond that, we seem to be

watching the problems inherent in the idea of a man's liberty being dependent on another man's justice, in the same way that, as Nuño knows, their livelihood is dependent on another man's generosity. The reaction of the superior to the inferior can, and does, vary, apparently, and the consequences can be enormous, as the play goes on to demonstrate, as a corollary of men's inability to cope with a system of whose demands they are more or less aware.

What reduces men's ability to cope with the system is suggested by Don Tello and Celio after Sancho and Pelayo leave, when Celio denies Don Tello's imputation that his judgement of Elvira is clouded by passion: "D. TELLO. Bien se ve, Celio, que hablas/ con pasión. CELIO. Alguna tuve ..." (512-3). All men are susceptible to such clouding of the reason, including those in authority; obedience to a man distorted by passion is not liberty - he who denies his reason is denying his own natural liberty, and hence of necessity does not govern others rationally - but the situation must often arise. That much is obvious to a detached observer, but someone involved in such a situation does not appreciate the pleasing logic of the syllogism - quite the reverse: he tends to become similarly disordered (cf. Fuenteovejuna).

The irony is, that - given the qualifications of human motivation, which are going to beset any system - the

flavour of most of the first act, until the wedding scenes, suggests that everyone involved is meeting the requirements of the system: they are all doing the right thing. Sancho courts Elvira according to custom; Elvira coyly accepts, according to custom; they both realise they must ask Father, according to custom; Father benignly approves Sancho's request, and then tells Sancho to report it all to the local señor; Sancho dutifully obeys Nuño and reports to Don Tello; Don Tello lives in a manner befitting a noble; Don Tello greets Sancho courteously and treats him magnanimously; and Sancho and Nuño are delighted by Don Tello's generosity as well as by his honouring of the wedding with his presence (523 ff.) - Sancho even bestows on Don Tello the highest accolade, "un señor todo perfeto" (546). Yet, from all these impeccable actions and strict adherence to recognised conventions, disaster ensues, and Sancho and Elvira, who do most of all to conform with the requirements (obedience to Nuño, Don Tello, the King etc.), are the ones who suffer most from the calamity. How so?

The answer is partly to be found in the parting words of Don Tello and Feliciana after their interview with Sancho:

D. TELLO. Hay algunas labradoras
que, sin afeites ni galas,
suelen llevarse los ojos,

y a vuelta dellos el alma;
pero son tan desdeñosas,
que sus melindres me cansan.
FELICIANA. Antes, las que se defienden
suelen ser más estimadas. (515-22)

Don Tello, who professes to have little interest in peasant girls, says that the pretty ones are too disdainful to be attractive, whereupon Feliciana remarks that "unwilling" girls ought to be held in higher rather than lower esteem. This little aphorism of Feliciana sounds logical enough, but is really rather empty, since, in practice, it is as likely as not to result in paradox, for if resistance to seduction increases admiration it will thus increase desire. (Later, we see Don Tello caught in just such a paradox, as drawing-room chatter turns into a real situation.) Don Tello's attitude to peasant girls is thus compatible with the system - but only until one does arouse his interest, which is to say, his self-interest. The point is, that these are only words - perhaps uttered in all sincerity, but nevertheless only words - which can be either forgotten, or given another meaning by self-interest, when other passions, other contexts, distort their original meaning.

In the following scene, we find the complement of this observation, as Sancho and Nuño preen themselves on the success of the former's interview with Don Tello; their satisfaction is not occasioned by the fact that the conventions

have been duly observed, but by the fact that the conventions have worked to their advantage. Naturally enough, everyone - Don Tello, Nuño, Sancho etc. - is satisfied with the system for as long as it protects their interests. Thus, although Sancho and Nuño shortly change the subject (561 ff.), Lope does not: the speech and behaviour of Sancho, Elvira and Nuño are as susceptible as anyone else's to the distortions of self-interest, vanity, passion or whatever, and the point of the foregoing is to suggest that when we look for reasons to explain the sudden disorder of this apparently ordered section of society, it is not enough just to point at Don Tello, although the greatest responsibility must be his. We are given an opportunity to examine these implications in the scenes of the wedding and the abduction which close the first Act.

Immediately obvious in the wedding scene is, once again, the presence of Pelayo, who, we might recall, has shown that he knows exactly what marriage is all about - he can see the truth behind the circumlocutions. We might also recall that Nuño and Sancho are intensely anxious to impress Don Tello with their past glory and present honour, cf.:

NUÑO. ¡Oh!, si aquesta casa fuera,
pues los huéspedes espera
más ricos y poderosos
deste reino, un gran palacio ... (536-9)

and "... quiero/ que entienda este caballero/ que soy algo o que lo fuí," (576-8). Now the whole community, from señor to "clown", is present at a ceremony which involves the whole community, and all the themes previously defined come together. After greeting Nuño and Sancho, the first thing Don Tello does is to cast an eye over the girls he sees; we may or may not like to take this seriously: it is perhaps only the kind of behaviour we see in a man who winks at all the waitresses. However, we have to connect it with Don Tello's social situation and its attendant restrictions, and it is Pelayo who constantly draws attention to Don Tello's excessive interest in the womenfolk: "¡Cómo pescuda por ellas,/ y por los zagales no!" (611-12). One aspect which may strike us about the whole scene is, that while Pelayo - in distracting Don Tello just as he distracted Sancho when the latter was asking for Elvira's hand - is hitting the nail on the head, he is constantly brushed aside, not only by Don Tello, but also by Sancho and Nuño! Don Tello's irritation is to be expected, but the opprobrium heaped upon Pelayo by Sancho and Nuño seems designed to indicate something to us, for what Sancho and Nuño are doing is rejecting the truth Pelayo offers; perhaps that is because they would rather not face it, but it seems more likely that it is because Pelayo is ruining their attempts to impress Don Tello, which, in turn, is perhaps why Pelayo

repeats, in essence, the quip we recently (498-9 quoted above) heard him offer to Feliciana: "Así mi madre me hizo" (618). At any rate, Nuño eventually tells Pelayo explicitly to go somewhere else:

> PELAYO. Y yo, ¿adónde he de sentarme?
> NUÑO. Allá en la caballeriza
> tú la fiesta solemniza.
> D. TELLO. ¡Por Dios que siento abrasarme!.-
> ¿Cómo la novia se llama?
> PELAYO. Pelayo, señor.
> NUÑO. ¿No quieres
> callar? Habla a las mujeres,
> y cuéntaste tú por dama, (643-50)

(an ironic twist in itself, since "habla a las mujeres" is what Pelayo is saying about Don Tello). Those concerned, then, rather than hear the truth spoken aloud, try to push it into the background; it is worth noting that, later in the play, the King treats Pelayo with much more respect. It is also worth noting that, later in the play, when Don Tello reveals his feelings to Elvira, most of us in the audience probably feel a sense of shock: we too do not always want to hear certain things, even if true.

When Elvira is brought into the wedding feast, Don Tello is smitten, and from this point on his reason is subordinated to his passions. There is little point in remarking that he should not let this happen, and particularly not with girls of inferior status; our starting point - and Lope's - is that it does happen, in which event, what do our theories

mean when transported from hypothesis to reality?

It would be useful to examine first Don Tello's speech and behaviour, in order to summarise briefly the nature of the intellectual disruption within and the consequent denial of reason without. This self-imprisonment of Don Tello's begins as soon as he acts on his desire for Elvira - deeds first, words later. Thus, he forbids the entry of the priest, and from then on uses this non-appearance of the priest as a pretext for not returning Elvira to Sancho, and as a sort of justification for his behaviour which he foists upon everyone, from peasants to King. The sad paradox of the attitude he assumes makes itself apparent immediately and continually, e.g., in his spurning of Sancho's courtesy with words that are equally as applicable to himself as they are to Sancho: "¡Qué condición tan villana!/ ¡Qué puesto en su gusto está!" (681-2). His obsession with Elvira, and with his own gratification, drives him to ignore the warnings of his own servant, Celio (who, within Don Tello's household, is often the spokesman for common sense), cf. 727-50. When we next see Don Tello, at the beginning of Act 2, his reasoning verges on the absurd. He is trying to tell Elvira that Sancho

> No es tu esposo;
> ni un villano, aunque dichoso,
> digno de tanta hermosura. (886-8)

Relying on an irrelevant legal quibble after he himself had twisted the law to make the quibble possible, he avoids the fact that, by the same token, she is not worthy of him, Don Tello. His other arguments are as foolish as Elvira shows them to be, and, presumably, Lope's only point in putting them before us is to make us aware of Don Tello's self-deception as caused by his twisting of reason:

> D. TELLO. ¿Dices que no puede ser
> ver, desear y querer?
> ELVIRA. Es verdad.
> D. TELLO. Pues dime, ingrata,
> ¿cómo el basilisco mata
> con sólo llegar a ver?
> ELVIRA. Ese es sólo un animal.
> D. TELLO. Pues ése fué tu hermosura. (924-30)

Elvira, of course, can only trot out all the usual explanations of amor which Don Tello and the audience already know, but this has no effect on Don Tello because he is trying to justify that which he already knows is wrong - hence silly paradoxes such as "eres necia en ser discreta" (946) - doubly paradoxical since he had said before that disdainful girls bored him (519-20 quoted above).

What we watch and hear is Don Tello's destruction of his own liberty, which is what turning away from reason, choosing evil, entails; Don Tello's own words give him away: comparing Elvira's beauty with a basilisk, he is implying that Elvira is similarly governed by instinct and hence not

endowed with the faculties of reason and choice. Elvira's rebuttal,

> ELVIRA. El basilisco mortal
> mata teniendo intención
> de matar; y es la razón
> tan clara, que mal podía
> matarte cuando te vía
> para ponerte afición, (933-8)

suggests that the behaviour of the basilisk represents obedience to natural law, i.e., the fulfilling of a true end in life, whereas the true end of Elvira's beauty is not the gratification of Don Tello's desires - and neither is that the true end of Don Tello's position, power, and strength. Elvira's words, "Ese es sólo un animal" (929), focus our attention on all of this. (A few moments later Don Tello is again denying natural law, denying his own sister; "¿Es posible que tú seas/ mi hermana?" [969-70]). Don Tello proceeds to assert that he is obeying laws which force him to treat Elvira like this; that, however, is not strictly true, as he has been told, not only explicitly by Celio and Feliciana, but also implicitly by Sancho and Nuño. More to the point, he refuses to try to see beyond this dubious human law to which he claims allegiance, refusing to face higher laws, natural and divine laws, which forbid this kind of behaviour and which certainly do not admit of transgression for the sake of a silly human convention; such is the kind of danger referred

to earlier à propos of Don Tello's adherence to an accepted convention.

A phrase which reveals what all this means in terms of liberty is, "... estas leyes, a quien yo/ he de obedecer por fuerza," (957-8); as liberty consists in voluntary obedience to just law, the words "por fuerza," if "estas leyes" are just, give away Don Tello's loss of natural liberty, his submission to his own unreason; while, if "estas leyes" are unjust, a possibility which has already been suggested to the audience -

> Después que della me canse,
> podrá ese rústico necio
> casarse; que yo daré
> ganado, hacienda y dinero
> con que viva; que es arbitrio
> de muchos, como lo vemos
> en el mundo (741-7)

- then Don Tello (who is in a better position than anyone to disobey an unjust law, especially an unwritten social law) is just using the custom, and providing us with another example of words being used in an attempt to disguise behaviour. Of course, such pros and cons are again merely academic: the only important and relevant point is that Don Tello has forcibly abducted another man's betrothed and is seeking to induce her to sin. If his cause were just, he could command her obedience, and she could obey in freedom; as it is, obedience by Elvira to Don Tello would be a denial of her

natural liberty. When reason breaks down within a man, it is not only his own natural liberty which is threatened, but also that of those around him - to what extent being dependent only on the extent of his power.

Obviously, we may reasonably allocate to Don Tello the major responsibility for what happens, and we will no doubt sympathise with, or "side with," Sancho in his opposition to the crime. But there are other things to be seen which in real life we might overlook, or regard with indulgence, but which Lope has deliberately put before us. I refer to the extent - limited though it may be - to which Sancho and Elvira expose themselves to the aberrations of Don Tello. This was only hinted by the earlier scenes, when Sancho and Nuño were so excited by Don Tello's munificence, but it gradually becomes more obvious, first in Sancho's and Nuño's rejection of Pelayo's observations on Don Tello's behaviour at the wedding, and then in Sancho's and Elvira's behaviour after Don Tello has left the wedding. For Sancho and Elvira, too, break a moral law: they are <u>not</u> married properly, the priest has not bestowed God's blessing on their union, but they intend to consummate the union anyway. All very understandable, but the interesting thing is, that they feel constrained to revert to the same kind of secrecy and stealth that we noticed in their pre-marital relationship (this time with Sancho coming

to the back door in the middle of the night), and even to their former double-talk:

ELVIRA. Ya eres, Sancho, mi marido:
ven esta noche a mi puerta.
SANCHO. ¿Tendrásla, mi bien, abierta?
ELVIRA. Pues, ¡no!
SANCHO. Mi remedio ha sido. (715-8)

Love still depends on these subterfuges: although an outside agency has created a different situation, their behaviour is essentially similar to their behaviour at the beginning. (When Sancho does come to Elvira's back door, he is accompanied by Pelayo, a reminder that Sancho, having ignored Pelayo up to now, is here demonstrating the truth of Pelayo's view of marriage.)

However, the main point which Lope's structure seems to emphasise is that Elvira is abducted with ease <u>because of</u> the tryst she had with Sancho, a tryst which is arranged a few seconds after Juana's comment on Don Tello's power - ("PELAYO. Pues don Tello, ¿puede hacello?/ JUANA. Claro está, pues lo mandó." [701-2]) - a tryst which Sancho, in the style of Don Tello, seems to try to justify <u>via</u> word-play:

ELVIRA. No quiso que el cura entrara.
SANCHO. Pero si te persuades
a abrirme, será mejor;
que no es mal cura el amor
para sanar voluntades. (722-6)

Elvira is anticipating that tryst when she <u>opens the door</u> to Don Tello's cohorts ("Entra, Sancho de mi vida" [753]):

because Pelayo was right in betting that Elvira would be waiting by the door for Sancho's knock ("Apostaré/ que está por el agujero/ de la llave Elvira atenta," [781-3]), Elvira falls into Don Tello's hands. Sancho and Elvira are as guilty of breaking a law as is Don Tello; their guilt is hardly of the same category as Don Tello's, naturally, and certainly does not justify or nullify the latter's crime, but the action does suggest that responsibility for the disaster is not entirely on one side, in the sense that law breaks down on all sides. Natural liberty is obscured when a ruler behaves as Don Tello does; but it is also obscured when Sancho and Elvira behave the way they do, and for similar reasons. It is understandable - even valid - for Sancho to blame Nuño for the crime's being possible: "Criados son de don Tello,/ a quien me mandaste hablar;/ ¡mal haya, amén, el consejo!" (802-4) and "Tú me aconsejaste el daño,/ aconséjame el remedio," (827-8); but Sancho himself is also implicated, and so is Elvira. All men are capable of the imprudence which disrupts law and liberty, as well as individuals alone, and Sancho implies as much a few moments later:

> ¡Que trujese yo a mi casa
> el fiero león sangriento
> que mi cándida cordera
> me robara! ¿Estaba ciego?
> Sí estaba; que no entran bien

poderosos caballeros
en las casas de los pobres
que tienen ricos empleos, (841-8)

but he has had to learn the lesson the hard way. In view of what he says from hindsight,

Claro está que es el señor
que la ha llevado a su pueblo;
que el no me dejar casar
es el indicio más cierto, (809-12)

he might have had the foresight to tell Elvira to lock herself in rather than stand by the door ready to open it; but such things are always obvious with hindsight, and less so at the time of decision, and we could hardly have expected Sancho - or anyone else, probably - to think rationally in the circumstances of his spoiled wedding. The tragedy, perhaps, is not so much that such imprudence as we have witnessed on both sides is <u>likely</u>, but that it is <u>inevitable</u>. In practice, then, our talk about law and liberty is only relevant until the next human failing makes itself evident. That is not to relieve Don Tello of any guilt - he is clearly the immediate cause of the calamity; I am only pointing out that Lope is not letting us escape the realisation of our limitations by booing and hissing at Don Tello.

Another indication of the gulf between theory and practice is provided in the wedding scene by Sancho, who at one point refuses to obey Don Tello. This is Sancho's first

act of disobedience; it is not meant to show that Sancho has begun to realise that he should not obey an unjust ruler, or some similarly theoretical argument; it is just that he draws a line at the amount of attention Don Tello is to pay to his bride. Again, we notice how Sancho finds a pretext, which sounds valid but is irrelevant, for disobeying Don Tello, ("D. TELLO. Sentaos. SANCHO. Yo tanto favor,/ y mi señora presente," [637-8]), so that Feliciana is able to smooth things out; but when Don Tello really wants something, there is no stopping him. So, when Don Tello can no longer resist the temptation to try to possess Elvira himself, no-one can make him come to his senses - not Elvira, not Feliciana, not Celio, certainly not Sancho and Nuño, not even the King. He wants the wedding stopped, and the wedding is stopped. Sancho's willingness to obey or disobey now becomes unimportant. It is all very well to say that man's liberty demands his obedience to reason, and then calmly to discuss the extent of his obligation to obey reasonable law or to disobey unreasonable law, but Lope here confronts his audience with the uncomfortable realisation that none of the academic arguments mean very much in practice; for, in the kind of real-life situation which Lope is inventing for us here, the only thing that counts is, <u>who has the power</u>. Don Tello has only to say, "no entre el cura" (660), and the feast stops;

he has only to brush aside Sancho's attempts to reason with him, "No me dilates, señor,/ tanto bien; mis ansias mira ... (etc.)" (669-80), with an inappropriate contempt "¡Qué condición tan villana!/ ¡Qué puesto en su gusto está!" (681-2), calling Sancho's desire to conform with natural law "voluntad poco honesta" (686); he has only to tell Nuño to take Elvira home and call it a day - "Llévala, Nuño, y descansa/ esta noche." (687-8); and there is nothing anyone can do about it. Hence Juana's simple comment "pues, lo mandó" (702).

It is implied, then, that, for all the theories of mutual dependence, the master-vassal relationship is ultimately a one-way relationship: the weaker is dependent upon the stronger. Such a system can still assure men life, liberty, and salvation, if, but only if, the stronger element recognises its own responsibilities to law and behaves accordingly. When justice - natural, divine, or other - is denied by the stronger, liberty is destroyed and service becomes slavery; if we do not deduce this, Don Tello makes it clear to us in his "conclusive" argument to Celio,

> Finalmente,
> yo soy poderoso, y quiero,
> pues este hombre no es casado,
> valerme de lo que puedo, (747-50)

and in the actual deed of Don Tello in abducting Elvira. Nuño's despairing cry,

> Pero mis caducos años
> y mi desmayado esfuerzo,

¿qué podrán contra la fuerza
de un poderoso mancebo? (761-4)

curses his own inability to do anything, but young men are in the same predicament, and as we watch Sancho's anguish in the last scene, the word poderoso is repeated again, "... un hombre poderoso,/ y el más rico deste reino!" (814-5) and yet again, "que no entran bien/ poderosos caballeros ..." (845-6). Where indeed can Sancho find justice, when power is law, and the most powerful man in Sancho's world is the one who has flouted the law? Whence, justice having been destroyed, it is logical that Sancho's reason be affected, and Act I ends with Sancho's cries of death and madness.

Thus, Act I ends on a note of despair, the terrible despair of a man who senses that no principles of justice can be enforced against someone who has transgressed laws pertaining to the most intimate depths of his life and being, because the guardian of justice is its transgressor. This is, in essence, the despair of being governed by a tyrant. Act II, it may be noticed, begins on the same note as does Act I, but now the themes which began Act I - word-play, secrecy, dishonesty, all present among the closest and best-intentioned of human relationships - are shown in a context which is much more difficult and has much wider implications than the context of everyday human affairs, that context being human

justice, and, with it, human liberty.

The awkward aspect of Don Tello's self-defence - that Sancho and Elvira were not yet married - is that legal quibbles are not illegal. Morality and common-sense may shout aloud that Don Tello's point is so absurd that it cannot be taken seriously; but morality and common-sense are not always conspicuous in human affairs (if ever) - after all, Sancho and Elvira tended to justify their illicit tryst in the same way, the difference being that they said they <u>were</u> married, but were not - and that <u>can</u> be taken seriously, particularly when it means that a ridiculous legal quibble is used to pervert justice. So, as we watch all this, we may be asking ourselves, can justice depend on such absurdities? Since Don Tello obviously knows that his abduction of Elvira is criminal, we may say that it does not; however, in the sense that, for all concerned, Don Tello is, nominally, the arbiter of justice, it obviously does. Later, when the King becomes involved, we find that this kind of ambiguity in fact persists.

Regarding the first scenes of Act II, then, we find that the word-games and the dissimulation are more serious problems when they become part of man's system of justice. The light-hearted games of Act I are suddenly very sinister, as Elvira is ordered by Don Tello to hide (998 ff.), Sancho

and Nuño pretend that they trust Don Tello (1007 ff.), and Don Tello feigns ignorance and innocence (1079 ff.). All protagonists present are trying to avoid uttering the plain truth, but nevertheless Sancho offers Don Tello an analogical truth and the opportunity to make a choice. The truth is insinuated in Sancho's description of his thoughts about the moon and the flora:

> Salí a los campos, y a la luz que excede
> a las estrellas, que miraba en vano,
> a la luna veloz, que retrocede
> las aguas y las crece al Oceano,
> "Dichosa, dije, tú, que no te puede
> quitar el sol ningún poder humano
> con subir cada noche donde subes,
> aunque vengan con máscaras las nubes."
> Luego, volviendo a los desiertos prados,
> durmiendo con los álamos de Alcides
> las yedras vi con lazos apretados,
> y con los verdes pámpanos las vides.
> "¡Ay!, dije, ¿cómo estáis tan descuidados?
> Y tú, grosero, ¿cómo no divides,
> villano labrador, estos amores,
> cortando ramas y rompiendo flores?" (1039-54)

The scenes depicted represent natural justice and harmony, but, with the justice and harmony of his own life overthrown, Sancho feels driven to disrupt the justice he sees in nature; he is, it seems, describing the breakdown of law in himself, which has resulted from a breakdown on a higher social level, and which leads him to attack natural justice by hacking branches from the tallest tree: "llegué al árbol más alto, y a reveses/ y tajos igualé sus blancas mieses." (1061-2). He says he did it because "... fué tan alto y arrogante,/ que a los demás

como a pequeños mira." (1064-5), but there has to be a tallest tree, there has to be a superior, and Sancho is denying the natural hierarchy if he quarrels with that. Meanwhile, the choice he offers Don Tello is implicit in his lie about his defence of Don Tello,

> "¡Villanos, dije yo, tened respeto:
> don Tello, mi señor, es gloria y honra
> de la casa de Neira, y en efeto
> es mi padrino y quien mis bodas honra," (1071-4)

and in the request which follows it:

> Con esto, tú piadoso, tú discreto,
> no sufrirás la tuya y mi deshonra;
> antes harás volver, la espada en puño,
> a Sancho su mujer, su hija a Nuño. (1075-8)

That is the way the world <u>ought</u> to be, and Don Tello has the chance to restore order; but it is not the way the world <u>is</u>, and Don Tello is not going to fulfil the suggested responsibility.

All this manoeuvering is shortly made to look very silly, for suddenly the truth obtrudes of its own accord, as Elvira steps out of her hiding place. This basic truth, which gives the lie to Don Tello's play-acting, presents us with a scene which resembles a painting or a tableau in that it suddenly offers a complete picture of the situation: "Sale Elvira, y pónese en medio Don Tello," say the stage directions (1094+). Don Tello's crime is his disruption of natural law by keeping apart lovers and relatives; his anger stems from having his silly pretence exposed; Sancho is being forcibly restrained

by Nuño from attacking Don Tello - if he did so it would be a perversion of the social order, which is what behaviour such as Don Tello's brings about; Nuño restrains Sancho because he believes injustice must be fought with justice, not with anarchy; Feliciana is horrified, but unable to influence her brother because his own disorder destroys the natural courtesy he owes his own sister. That is the picture which is imprinted on our minds just before the play assumes a new dimension with Lope's introduction of the King.

To recapitulate in the light of the theme being examined, part of the picture, and of succeeding scenes, is that the destruction of liberty within Don Tello, by his submission to instinct and denial of reason, is now bringing about - as it must - the destruction of liberty in those dependent on him. As we already know, this is inevitable because of liberty's dependence on justice, and it is no use saying that liberty may be protected <u>via</u> disobedience to injustice, for we have just seen that what governs people's decisions to obey or disobey is not morality so much as power: thus, Don Tello's household have little choice but to obey Don Tello's orders, so they have to obey injustice and hence compromise their own liberty, as well as help Don Tello destroy the liberty of himself and others. Elvira, who has had no choice about anything much, is now physically a

prisoner, while Sancho's liberty is almost as damaged as is Don Tello's - not because he is obeying Don Tello, but because Don Tello's bestial behaviour has aroused a similarly irrational response; Sancho's behaviour, like Don Tello's is being shaped by instinct, the natural instinct of violence, a bestial force in men which is just as powerful as Don Tello's sexual drive. Sancho is here showing the same loss of reason that he showed at the end of Act I: his only wish is to die - a denial of both reason and instinct, cf. "Yo soy contento/ de morir y no vivir," (1111-2); "Escucha, Elvira, mi bien;/ yo me dejaré matar" (1115-6); "Matadme, escuderos" (1138); "... ¿será bueno vivir?" (1143); "que vida/ sin Elvira no la quiero" (1147-8); etc. Only Nuño retains a hold on reason and demands that Sancho, given the choice between justice and savagery, try to secure justice: "Vive, y pedirás justicia;/ que rey tienen estos reinos." (1149-50)

This is an occasion on which we are made aware of the enormous importance of law: if there is no higher justice worthy of the name, man's earthly existence is reduced to the level of the beasts, for law is reason, and reason is a reflection of the divine, that which raises man above the level of the beasts, that which makes him free. Here, however, we are watching a qualification of human justice, namely, that the ultimate arbiter of human justice is he who wields the

most power; it is one thing for Sancho to offer poetic images of himself cutting down the tallest and most arrogant tree, but quite another for him to succeed in doing so to the person at whom the image is directed. In practice, what happens is that Sancho has to approach Don Tello tactfully and try to shame him into returning Elvira, and the outcome is that it is Don Tello who orders that Sancho be cut down (that he is not is presumably because Don Tello's squires feel it is more sensible to overlook both Don Tello's insanity and Sancho's provocation, "Matadme, escuderos" [1138]), whereupon Sancho curses his inability to combat naked force of arms: "¡No tuviera yo una espada!" (1139).

Sancho, then, has to feign liberty (obedience) in order to have liberty restored, but the attempt is doomed, since the man with the power to assure liberty is he who is determined to destroy it. It is in the middle of all this chaos, this breakdown of law, this destruction of liberty, that Nuño first mentions the King, and from this moment the problems of human justice, shown until now in a limited local context, are enlarged to include the wider national picture. Sancho had called Don Tello a "señor todo perfeto" (546) - now he calls the King a "príncipe perfeto" (1180); Don Tello had said to Sancho, "Yo te haré justicia" (1086), and we witnessed the resulting travesty, its nature and its causes; the King has more power, more wealth, more status than Don Tello:

what will his justice be like?

With the introduction of the King, a digression is in order concerning the historical data (to use the term loosely) on which Lope based this play, and to which, at the end of the last Act, he specifically draws our attention - almost as a bibliographical reference:

> Y aquí acaba la comedia
> del mejor alcalde, historia
> que afirma por verdadera
> la corónica de España:
> la cuarta parte la cuenta. (2406-10)

It is worth considering for a moment this source material, which, as Lope tells us, is to be found in the Primera Crónica General,[2] (hereunder abbreviated as PCG), and to which he has made certain changes. There is little modern historical data available concerning Alfonso VII,[3] and, in view of my insufficient knowledge of mediaeval history, it would obviously be meaningless for me to pretend to make any firm assertions concerning the truth behind the history as it is presented in the PCG. However, I think I can safely say that there is a strong possibility that the PCG's account of the "iusticia

[2]Chapter 980 of the edition referred to here, namely, Vol. 5 of the "Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles," Tomo I, ed. R. Menéndez Pidál, (Madrid, 1906), pp. 659-60.

[3]The limited extent of this data is noted by C. Sánchez-Albornoz, in Estudios Sobre las Instituciones Medievales Españolas, (Mexico, 1965), p. 493, fn. 26.

dell emperador" is a glorified account of what was essentially a calculated political ploy on the part of Alfonso VII, who seems to have been what the Americans, with unusual etymological accuracy, would call a "shrewd operator." The object of the ploy, of course, would be to consolidate, in one or more of several ways, the King's power in a peripheral area of his kingdom. It seems appropriate to outline the grounds, pros, and cons of this judgement.

The grounds for supposing that the King had ulterior political motives[4] for going to Galicia to settle the complaint of a labrador lie mainly in the case itself. The main thing would seem to be that, so far as I know, it is unusual for a King to intervene personally on behalf of a peasant, especially a peasant not residing within the King's own estate. That the King grew up in Galicia cannot be taken seriously as an explanation of the King's interest in the labrador's rights: we know that the historical Alfonso VII was constantly milking the Galician hierarchy - especially

[4] I emphasise the word "ulterior" advisedly; obviously, if the King had gone to Galicia purely for love of justice, the deed would still have redounded to his credit, effected a desirable strengthening of his position, and thus be classified as an act of self-interest; but that, like Aristotle's definition of love, would be only a verbal truth, and not very useful in practice, when distinctions become necessary (between means and ends, for example).

the ecclesiastical - of its wealth;[5] there is no sentiment in politics, as the less-than-intimate relationship between Alfonso VII and his mother, Doña Urraca, makes plain;[6] and anyway, there is no indication that the infanzón of the PCG was himself anything other than Galician - in fact, it is presumably possible that the King knew that infanzón as a result of his Galician upbringing, and thus knew that he was too powerful.

In the history, the initial crime of the infanzón is that he "tollio por fuerca a un laurador su heredat."[7] The seizure of land is a very serious mediaeval crime (later, I shall examine the implications of Lope's changing the crime to abduction and rape), but not one that would call for the personal intervention of the King unless it were on a much larger scale than that of a peasant's inheritance; ultimately, however, in both history and play, the crime for which the noble is, ostensibly, executed is laesa majestas, or treason. Although laesa majestas may be proved serious via reference to natural law, divine law, etc., it is, like

[5] v. Sánchez-Albornoz, op. cit., Chap. VIII, in particular pp. 488 ff.

[6] v. PCG, p. 648a, for example.

[7] PCG, p. 659b, lines 44-5.

its modern counterpart "threatening the security of the state," clearly a crime eminently suitable for being tailored by a ruler to suit his own self-interest, and in fact many crimes may be described as laesa majestas.[8] The King would take laesa majestas seriously, particularly blatant laesa majestas such as the infanzón's disobedience, but the reason for that would be because of the aforementioned nature of laesa majestas, i.e., a challenge to the King's power.

If we are to consider the possibility of the historical King's acting purely out of self-interest, we have to consider what his motives might be. In fact, they could be one, or a combination, of several: the most obvious ones would be, to consolidate his power in a distant corner of the realm by making an example of a very powerful noble, and to demonstrate his determination to impose the royal will in every part of the land - the point of such an action being, obviously, to discourage other powerful men from opposing the King;[9] the King might also want to demonstrate and extend his

[8] cf. F. S. Lear, "The crime was not limited to such overt acts of violence as would bring personal injury to the ruler but came to include maledictions as well as mere offensive expressions of opinion," "Crimen Laesae Maiestatis in the Lex Romana Wisigothorum," Speculum, IV, 1929, pp. 73-87, v. p. 85. For an interesting examination of the concept in Tudor England, v. J. R. Tanner, Tudor Constitutional Documents, (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 375-381.

[9] The same principle was involved - although the case is not strictly analogous - when William the Conqueror, after taking London, returned to the southern area to exact exemplary retribution from such Anglo-Saxon nobles as continued to resist him.

power in a more specific sense, namely, by extending his jurisdiction over a wider area, to encourage his subjects to think of him as the supreme justice, and thus to bring their complaints to him rather than to lesser local justices. As Sidney Painter points out, "Rights of jurisdiction were valued for three reasons. For one thing they were profitable. In minor cases one imposed money penalties. When a man was hanged, the lord having jurisdiction seized all his personal property. Then having these rights greatly increased the lord's control over his tenants. The combination of delegate of the royal judicial authority and the power of the landlord was almost impossible to resist. Finally, these rights were a mark of prestige."[10] In this extract, the author is referring to lords, but the same principles apply to Kings, particularly, in Alfonso VII's case, the first principle, that rights of jurisdiction were lucrative. The King's defence of the labrador would thus be very appropriate to such an end.

If the above motives are indeed behind the King's moves in this situation, then the closing sentences of the historical account of the action would seem to confirm the possibility: "Estonces ell emperador andido descubierta et manifiestamientre por Gallizia toda, et paziguo toda la tierra;

[10] Mediaeval Society, Cornell University Press, 1968, p. 54.

et tan grande fue ell espanto que todos los omnes de la tierra ouieron por este fecho, que non fue ninguno osado en toda la tierra de fazer tuerto a otro. Et esta justicia et otras tales como estas auie fechas ell emperador, por que era ell muy temido de las yentes, et uiuien cada unos en lo suyo en paç."[11] That the King then proceeded to "show the flag," as it were, through the rest of the region, immediately after his confrontation with the infanzón, seems to indicate that the King's motives were more than just love of justice, and that the gambit worked very well, enabling Alfonso to secure his hold on the region. Although the PCG gives no date for the event, so that we cannot find any specific links between this instance and others, data published by Sánchez-Albornoz makes it very clear that Alfonso VII did indeed avail himself of various political ploys to assert his authority in Galicia, whether this particular occasion is or is not one such ploy.[12]

On the other hand, there is the possibility - remote though it seems to me - that the King's motives were wholly above board, that his interest was solely in upholding justice and punishing tyranny, so the aspects of the history which offer that possibility ought to be considered. One is apparent in the tone of the PCG, which suggests that the King

[11] PCG, p. 660a, lines 45-54.

[12] op. cit., Chapter VIII.

went to Galicia simply because he was "muy justiciero." Whether we accept this, and the value it would thus give to the steps taken by the King, depends on how much credence we afford the chronicler, how much idealism we expect from rulers, and how much weight we give to either when balanced against the opposing possibilities. The other factor which might suggest that the King had no desire other than to see justice done is his sending of a letter before taking action in person: the infanzón might have obeyed the letter ordering him to return the labrador's property, so that the King would not have been able to go and execute the noble and make a show of his presence in the area. Nevertheless, had the noble obeyed the King's letter, the very fact of a powerful noble's backing down at the command of the King would have enhanced the King's power in the area; furthermore, the King may have calculated (especially if he knew what the infanzón was like) that the noble would disobey his orders and thus give him just the opportunity he needed to punish the noble on a charge of treason (laesa majestas); he would not have been the only King to use such a scheme - Philip II of France, in 1200, pursued a similar course of action against King John of England, in order to create a pretext for declaring forfeit John's fiefs in France (as against a pretext for executing him).

All things considered, then, it seems to me more likely that the King's action in this case was taken on the grounds of political advantage, including the disposal of an overly powerful lord. I repeat that I do not have the background to make conclusive judgements about these historical matters, and that the foregoing is therefore, to a certain extent, conjecture. There *might* have been all kinds of qualifying circumstances - such as various laws and contracts which we do not know about, and so on - but the *PCG* does not mention them, modern historians have not investigated them in great detail, and it seems doubtful that Lope could be aware of them. What I have tried to do is to show that it is possible to see that Lope could have inferred the motive of political ambition from the King's behaviour, because the important thing as far as the play is concerned is not to determine whether the *historical* King was guided by self-interest or by altruism, but to see how far *Lope*'s Alfonso VII is depicted as being guided by the one or the other, which means that the *possibilities* had to be explored first.

Returning to the play, we find that, as it develops, the plot becomes increasingly concerned with the struggle between the King and Don Tello, to such an extent that by the *end* of the play Sancho, Nuño and Elvira appear to be almost ancillary characters: they have, within the fiction, little

control over their own situation, and, like us, can only stand back and observe the behaviour of the superiors, and await its outcome. Lope prepares us for this when the King is first mentioned, by Nuño in Act II (1170 ff.). Sancho, listening to Nuño's suggestion that he go to the King for justice, expresses only scepticism at the idea:

> ¡Ay, Nuño!, tengo por cierto
> que el rey de Castilla, Alfonso,
> es un príncipe perfeto;
> mas ¿por dónde quieres que entre
> un labrador tan grosero?
> ¿Qué corredor de palacio
> osará mi atrevimiento
> pisar? ¿Qué portero, Nuño,
> permitirá que entre dentro?
> Allí, a la tela, al brocado,
> al grave acompañamiento
> abren las puertas, si tienen
> razón, que yo lo confieso;
> pero a la pobreza, Nuño,
> sólo dejan los porteros
> que miren las puertas y armas,
> y esto ha de ser desde lejos.
> Iré a León y entraré
> en Palacio, y verás luego
> cómo imprimen en mis hombros
> de las cuchillas los cuentos.
> Pues ¡andar con memoriales
> que toma el rey! ¡santo y bueno!
> Haz cuenta que de sus manos
> en el olvido cayeron; (1178-1202)

he even assumes that Alfonso is a "príncipe perfeto," but says, in effect, "not <u>that</u> perfect."[13] It is true that Nuño

[13] One wonders what reaction this evoked from Lope's audience, some of whom may have managed to plough through one or more of the contemporary tomes delineating the qualities necessary for princely perfection, which almost invariably included strictures to the effect that the King should always listen to petitions, <u>especially</u> those from the poor.

has confidence in the King, - perhaps only to get Sancho out of the way, cf. "que si aquí te quedas, pienso/ que te han de quitar la vida" (1214-15)? - but he has been wrong so many times that the audience cannot really be reassured by this. None of this, incidentally, occurs in the history, according to which, the labrador makes straight for the Court without a second thought - which is not to say that he had no misgivings, but which is to say that Lope pointedly tells us something which the history does not suggest. Later, we see that Sancho was right, he is kicked out of the Court, and eventually he only gains access to the King because of don Enrique's casual remark, "Un labrador gallego he visto echado/ a esta puerta, y bien triste," (1316-17). Yet it is at that point, when the King orders Sancho to be brought before him, that the Conde voices the conventional - perhaps too conventional - phrases of admiration:

> ¡Virtud heroica y rara!
> ¡Compasiva piedad, suma clemencia!
> ¡Oh ejemplo de los reyes,
> divina observación de santas leyes! (1321-4)

It sounds good, but the trouble is that that is how the other levels of society we have seen were also introduced, that is, with the natural and social order apparently being upheld; on those occasions we quickly became aware of harmony wavering into disharmony, and this seems to happen once again on the highest, monarchical, level. At the end of the play, the same

Conde urgently begs the King to display clemency, and the King flatly refuses to do so.

If the preceding paragraph points out some preliminary hints that the King's motives are not pure and simple, there seems to be another interesting note to that effect given by Lope in that, whereas the PCG gives no date at all for the event, Lope specifically places it in the turbulent early years of Alfonso VII's reign. Whether or not the audience can recall the names, dates, and other data offered by the editor of the "Clásicos Castellanos" text (v. notes to 1310 and 2410), two references, one at the beginning of each Court scene, should remind the audience of two prominent historical personages who assume considerable importance in the early years of Alfonso VII's reign: Alfonso el Batallador ("el de Aragón" [1309]) and Doña Urraca ("El cielo sabe, Conde, cuánto estimo/ las amistades de mi madre. [etc.] " [1619-24]), his stepfather and his mother respectively. Their importance (historically) lies in their being the two main obstacles to Alfonso VII's drive to assert his authority as King and, ultimately, to pacify and unify a larger area of Christian Spain than had been so unified by any preceding Christian monarch since the Moorish invasion. By reminding us of that, Lope seems to be suggesting that the action is taking place during, or immediately following, a period of turmoil and internecine

strife, when pragmatism is of far greater weight than idealism in determining a politician's course of action. Furthermore, even if the audience does not remember all the historical matters, Lope tells us at the end of the play where to find the historical source of his drama - a point which should be borne in mind *à propos* of all these historical references I am making, *particularly* since the play itself is so *different* from the history, implying that, if we do go to check the history, we must surely begin to wonder *why* all these differences arose.

The reference to Doña Urraca also suggests to me an idea far more directly concerned with the theme under discussion. Doña Urraca stands out in the history - even against the stiff competition - as a somewhat bizarre figure, and her conflict with Alfonso VII offers one of the more lurid examples of this:[14] she violently opposed his first coronation, and, as a result, was besieged by him until some accommodation was reached, and so on. The point I am making is that the struggle to gain and retain power is unscrupulous, unedifying and totally unsentimental - an obvious point, and one of which we are doubtless already aware, *but* the significant thing is that Lope reminds us of this point with the opening words of Act III,

[14] *PCG*, p. 648a, lines 18 ff.

the Act in which the King's justice is finally put before us. To see how Lope presents the royal justice, then, the King's behaviour in Act III, and especially in the last few scenes of the play, ought to be carefully examined.

Don Tello's power is constantly emphasised throughout the play, e.g. by Sancho ("poderosos caballeros" [846]), by Nuño ("Mas tiene por ley su gusto/ y poder para matar" [1895-6]), by Don Tello himself ("siendo aquí el más poderoso,/ el más rico y dadivoso!" [1264-5]), and the King in particular is made aware of it by Sancho:

SANCHO. Sancho, señor, es mi nombre,
que a los pies de tu piedad
pido justicia de quien,
en su poder confiado,
a mi mujer me ha quitado,
y me quitara también
la vida, si no me huyera.
REY. ¿Que es hombre tan poderoso
en Galicia?
SANCHO. Es tan famoso,
que desde aquella ribera
hasta la romana torre
de Hércules es respetado;
si está con un hombre airado,
sólo el cielo le socorre.
El pone y él quita leyes:
que estas son las condiciones
de soberbios infanzones
que están lejos de los reyes, (1423-40)

and by Nuño:

NUÑO. Pero, señor, tengo miedo
que traigáis dos hombres solos;
que no hay en todo este reino
más poderoso señor,
más rico ni más soberbio. (2038-42)

One of the conclusions inferred from the discussions above, concerning the relationships between Don Tello and his subordinates, was that justice seemed to depend on the amount of force on which its guardian could rely - a conclusion which is surely reinforced by Nuño's agonised words in Act III:

> ¡Que sufra el mundo que estén
> sus leyes en tal lugar,
> que el pobre al rico ha de dar
> su honor, y decir que es justo!
> Mas tiene por ley su gusto
> y poder para matar. (1891-6)

When the King decides to go to Galicia to bring Don Tello to justice, it is because there is no-one else who can do so, because no-one in Galicia can exert greater power than Don Tello; that Don Tello is eventually brought to justice, then, is only because someone more powerful wants him to be punished, so that when the King refers to himself as "el mejor alcalde, el rey," (1776), we may feel that the King's superiority as a judge is not a factor of any inherent powers or God-given talents, but of the strength he represents in political terms; as Nuño says, men alone are insufficient:

> NUÑO. ¿Viene gran gente con él?
> SANCHO. Dos hombres.
> NUÑO. Pues yo te ruego,
> hijo, que no intentes nada,
> que será vano tu intento;
> que un poderoso en su tierra,
> con armas, gente y dinero,
> o ha de torcer la justicia,
> o alguna noche, durmiendo,
> matarnos en nuestra casa (1955-63)

but Nuño does not know that the man who is coming is - like Don Tello - a man whose power is magnified by his position. Thus, when the King arrives at Don Tello's abode, he calmly relies on his position as "Yo" to intimidate Don Tello. When Don Tello and the King are finally face-to-face, Don Tello surrenders only when the King tells him, "yo soy el Rey" (2261): it is the King's power, not his just cause, which overcomes Don Tello. Lope seems to be implying as much in the brief exchange between Don Tello and the King:

> D. TELLO. ... Y vos, ¿adónde traéis
> la vara?
> REY. En la vaina está,
> de donde presto saldrá,
> y lo que pasa veréis. (2253-56)

The King is referring, of course, to his sword. Don Tello does not get the point, but the audience should.

That human justice must be supported by force seems inevitable, given the rarity with which reason prevails in human affairs, and the suggestion can hardly be classified as any kind of profound insight. Those of Lope's audience who thought about the matter at all were, no doubt, well aware that a lawful society depended on a firm and just government, so that it might be asked, what is so significant about Lope's demonstration of the alliance between power and justice? The answer has to take the form of another question: what is the quality of the justice displayed by the King? At

the end of the play we see a criminal punished and his victims recompensed (almost), and we may even feel that the world would be a good place if only the administration of justice could remain in the right hands, if only all kings displayed Alfonso VII's devotion to duty, etc., - if only, that is, all the lessons of the "prince-improvers" could be adhered to. But should we be entirely satisfied with this outcome, and should we be so uncritical of the procedures which produce it? There are indications that we should not.

One thing which may strike us about the King's methods of imposing his justice is the extent to which they are dependent on secrecy and dissimulation. As in the history, the King orders that his departure be kept secret and that callers be told that the King is too ill to see anyone: "... aquesto no se publique [etc.]" (1726-35); in the history it is added that he and his aides travel in disguise. Lope also makes him issue another order which should be noticed: he tells Pelayo to <u>keep quiet</u> - in other words, he is telling one of the few sources of truth we have, that the truth must not be spoken, that a lie must be told, "aunque todo el mundo os pida/ que digáis quién soy" (1756-7). Later, Nuño, with less subtlety, talks of locking up all the peasants: "Cerrados pienso tenerlos" (2036). Of course, we know <u>why</u> the King has to resort to such artifices: he wants to avoid warning the

noble of his approach - that is presumably the reason for his secrecy in the history, and Lope suggests as much in the King's warning to Nuño:

> Avisad los labradores
> que no digan a Don Tello
> que viene pesquisidor; (2033-5)

however, we cannot feel happy upon being shown in this manner that human justice, in certain circumstances, apparently depends on this kind of secrecy, lying, and even in a minor case of preventive detention. For one thing, such methods clearly cannot be reconciled with the search for truth in which we would like to see justice engage, nor can we feel that such methods are very reliable, since, clearly, such arrangements can easily go wrong.

Nothing goes wrong in this case, however, and the King finally has Don Tello where he wants him. Where does he want him? Apparently, he is determined to see him dead. We might derive a certain atavistic satisfaction from Don Tello's execution, but, if we do, I think we run the risk of forgetting or ignoring certain noticeable aspects of Lope's presentation of Don Tello. Don Tello does become terribly disordered and is knowingly guilty of some terrible crimes, but he is no Fernán Gómez of Fuenteovejuna. He is respected and admired by the peasants at the beginning, betrays a surprisingly regretful or unhappy tone even in the course of his tyranny,

for example,

> mas pienso que bien decía,
> mirando la sujeción
> del humano corazón,
> que no hay mayor señorío
> que pocos años y brío,
> hermosura y discreción, (1881-6)

and is unarguably behaving in a manner of which most men are capable - particularly in his position, with nothing in sight to stop him - even asserting, presumably with some justification, that society's mores permit him to do this (741-7 quoted above), and, further, that they force him to:

> ¡Y ojalá fueras mi igual!
> Mas bien ves que tu bajeza
> afrentara mi nobleza,
> y que pareciera mal
> juntar brocado y sayal.
> Sabe Dios si amor me esfuerza
> que mi buen intento tuerza;
> pero ya el mundo trazó
> estas leyes, a quien yo
> he de obedecer por fuerza, (949-58)

and, later, "... si fuera mi igual,/ que ya me hubiera casado." (1289-90). But the most remarkable aspect of Don Tello's behaviour is his honesty, submission, and contrition, at the end of the play, at which time we might feel a certain sympathy, and possibly admiration, for Don Tello; if we do, we are certainly not being overly sentimental or forgetful, for Lope makes Feliciana and both of the King's aides, all of whom know the facts as well as the King and the audience do, try to persuade the King to be less severe with Don Tello:

D. ENRIQUE. Si puedo en presencia vuestra....
CONDE. Señor, muévaos a piedad
que os crié en aquesta tierra.
FELICIANA. Señor, el conde don Pedro
de vos por merced merezca
la vida de Tello. (2374-79)

Nevertheless, the King refuses to reconsider his verdict, and coldly brushes aside the repeated requests for clemency (none of which, incidentally, come from Don Tello), giving as his reason,

Cuando pierde de su punto
la justicia, no se acierta
en admitir la piedad:
divinas y humanas letras
dan ejemplos. (2387-91)

Whatever limited truth that aphorism may contain - and let us not forget that divine and human letters also provide examples of its opposite - it surely depends on the crime and the punishment of which the King is speaking; the King goes on to say:

Es traidor
todo hombre que no respeta
a su rey, y que habla mal
de su persona en ausencia. (2391-4)

Superficially acceptable as a truth, this latter definition cannot be indiscriminately applied in practice (unless we want to make a traitor out of anyone who commits any crime at all), and we have to ask ourselves, is Don Tello really a traitor? Can his disregard of the King's written instructions seriously be construed as a wilful act of laesa majestas, as the King is so anxious to prove? And did Don Tello actually not

respect, or speak ill of, the King? We may, or we may not, be inclined to feel that Don Tello's treason is treason in name only; the point is, that the question is obviously open, and that the crime becomes the capital crime of treason because the King wants to call it that. We may recall that the King's first question to Sancho when he learned of Don Tello's reaction to his letter was, "Carta de mi mano escrita../ Mas qué, ¿debió de rompella?" (1699-1700), to which Sancho replied, "Yes and no":

> Leyóla, y no la rompió;
> mas miento, que fué rompella
> leella y no hacer por ella
> lo que su Rey le mandó, (1705-8)

whereupon the King, calling this a "buen modo/ de hablar" (1721-2), decided that the provocation was sufficient. When he confronts Don Tello, the main charge he lays against him is this one of disregarding the King's instructions -

> Villano, ¡por mi corona,
> que os he de hacer respetar
> las cartas del Rey! (2268-70)

> Cuando esta causa no hubiera,
> el desprecio de mi carta,
> mi firma, mi propia letra,
> ¿no era bastante delito? (2364-7)

and of course 2391-4 quoted above.[15]

[15] On the point of the King's determination to charge Don Tello with treason, it is worth recalling that Lope shows himself, in other plays, well aware of the implications of such situations; in El Duque de Viseo, for example, the King,

It might be objected that the charge of treason is irrelevant, that Don Tello deserves death for his offences against the peasants, and that the King would have, or should have, executed Don Tello whether or not disregard of his letter was involved.[16] It is difficult to be certain as to whether or not the rape of a peasant girl by a noble was a capital offence,[17] but what might concern us more than the legal details is the way in which Lope has presented the King's attitude to Elvira's situation. Given a minimal suspension

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by twisting an innocuous remark, imputes the crime of treason to a man entirely innocent of any crime.

[16] Cf., e.g., Salomon: "Certes, c'est pour avoir desobéi aux ordres royaux que Don Tello est puni exemplairement; mais c'est aussi pour avoir accompli un forfait condamné comme exorbitant par la conscience collective espagnole: le viol d'une vassale." (op. cit., p. 888). Such statements cannot be left unqualified, as I shall try to show.

[17] Later Roman Law, and, probably, the Código de Eurico, laid down that the punishment for abduction and/or rape should be death - v. El Código de Eurico, Edición, Palingenesia & Indices por Alvaro d'Ors, "Estudios Visigóticos," Vol. II, (Madrid, CSIC, 1960), pp. 140 ff. In the Fuero Juzgo (1241 - the first Castilian translation of the Forum Judicium of 699), the punishment recommended for "algun omne libre" who "lieva por fuerza muier virgen o bibda" is reparation via the ceding of property, loss of liberty (i.e., becoming a servant of the offended family), and (if rape was committed) 200 lashes given in public; v. the Real Academia Española edition, (Madrid, 1815), Libro III, Título 3, Ley 1. Although there is no mention of the death penalty for rape in the Fuero Juzgo, death is the recommended penalty in Las Siete Partidas (v. Partida VII, Título 20, Ley 3), at least when "alguna mujer biuda, de buena fama, o virgen, o casada, o religiosa" is the offended party.

of disbelief, or the simplest level of reaction to what is happening on stage, most of the audience will be hoping that Elvira will not be overpowered by Don Tello before the King rescues her; we can, therefore, hardly fail to notice - particularly as Lope's scene-arrangement keeps us in touch with what is happening both in Tello's mansion and around the King - that, when Elvira finally is raped, Tello has time to rape her because the King delays his arrest, and that, indeed, the crime is committed while the King is enjoying a slap-up lunch! The structure of this part of the play warrants close examination.

When the King has completed his (somewhat perfunctory) interrogation of the peasants, he says,

> Caballeros, descansemos,
> para que a la tarde vamos
> a visitar a don Tello, (2112-14)

which is rather odd, considering his conversation with Nuño of a few minutes before:

> REY. La información quiero hacer.
> NUÑO. Descansad, señor, primero;
> que tiempo os sobra de hacella.
> REY. Nunca a mí me sobra tiempo. (2051-54)

After the interrogation are shown the peasants discussing, first, the King's judicial procedures and, then, the preparations for his meal, (vv. 2122-48), whereupon the scene changes to Don Tello's house, where Tello, who clearly has not yet raped

Elvira, is furiously chasing her, obviously finally out of control (vv. 2153 ff.). This latter scene is pointedly sandwiched between the scenes showing us the King's activities, so that, in the following scene (vv. 2195 ff.), it is made apparent that Tello finally caught Elvira, and raped her, while, as already noted, the King was lunching and resting. So, when Elvira finishes her story of the crime, what do we think of the King's remark, "Pésame de llegar tarde" (2355)? How can we believe his contention that,

> llegar a tiempo quisiera
> que pudiera remediar
> de Sancho y Nuño las quejas, (2356-58)

when his sense of urgency was seen to fade for as long as it took to eat a hearty meal? What kind of justice <u>is</u> he effecting? His words suggest that he is punishing Tello for this last offence against Elvira,

> pero puedo hacer justicia
> cortándole la cabeza
> a Tello; venga el verdugo (2359-61)

- but he had called for a priest and an executioner long before he knew of the rape ("Haced traer de secreto/ un clérigo y un verdugo" [2120-21]).

It is difficult not to feel that, as far as the peasants are concerned, <u>the King might just as well have not intervened</u>; Tello had always intended to return Elvira to her family after he had conquered her resistance, so that all the

King's machinations have not prevented that which the peasants most feared. Taking account of the structure of the play, particularly the details of those scenes examined in the preceding paragraph, we thus arrive at the startling conclusion that, by the end of the play, Sancho and Elvira and their unhappiness are almost incidental to the high-level political intrigue in which they have become involved. If the reasoning I have applied is valid, it may partly explain Lope's reasons for changing the crime committed by the noble, from disseisin in the history to abduction and rape in the play.[18] For one thing, the historical dispossession was a single act, which did not place anyone in danger, whereas the abduction is a continuing crime which offers great dramatic potential, as a perilous situation against which the political intrigue is set - not, that is, merely to titillate the audience, but to make us aware of the disparity between that which we would desire of human justice and that which is being presented as human justice, a disparity which becomes increasingly overt in the closing scenes, as described above. For another thing, Elvira is finally raped, and that is a crime which, unlike

[18] The usual explanation for this, v.e.g. Americo Castro, Lope de Vega, "Bibl. Literaria del Estudiante," Vol. XIV, (Madrid, 1933), p. 20, is that it offers more human interest, appeals more to the audience, etc.; that is difficult to gainsay, but does lead one to wonder why Lope bothered to use a historical source at all.

disseisin, cannot be undone, so that the point made of a similar occurrence in Calderón's El Alcalde de Zalamea may also be made here, namely, that human justice can only be dismally unsatisfactory in certain cases, offering mere retribution and no hope of full reparation. Perhaps Lope is emphasising that via the King's arrangements at the end of it all:

> Da, Tello, a Elvira la mano,
> para que pagues la ofensa
> con ser su esposo; y después
> que te corten la cabeza,
> podrá casarse con Sancho,
> con la mitad de tu hacienda
> en dote. Y vos, Feliciana,
> seréis dama de la Reina,
> en tanto que os doy marido
> conforme a vuestra nobleza. (2395-2404)

Having heard Elvira's vivid account of the rape, we are invited to wonder how much consolation is afforded Sancho and Elvira by Elvira's marriage to, and inheritance from, Don Tello, particularly as it is announced in the same breath as the King's plans for Feliciana, which seem strongly reminiscent of the mediaeval gambit of assuring influence in a certain area by marrying a trusted courtier to a local leading lady.

The impression all this leaves - again, if the foregoing reasoning is correct - is that justice (of a sort) is done, but that the offended parties are in part recompensed,

and see their offender punished, not so much because they have a just cause, but because their needs, in this case, happen to coincide with the King's own requirements. That is not to say that Sancho and Elvira did not have a just cause: quite the reverse, for the whole point is, that the King's designs have to be tailored to fit an ostensibly just cause. The ramifications of this, and its implications for the quality of human justice, are all too obvious, and the title of the play invites us to ponder the meaning and the irony of the King's claim to be "el mejor alcalde." Nuño's last words, "temblando estoy" (2405) are perhaps more than just an exclamation, and we may also consider that even half of Don Tello's wealth, which Sancho and Elvira now have, is considerable; one day, they or their descendants may find themselves on the wrong side in the royal power game.

Is it so surprising that the justice Sancho so desperately seeks is ultimately dependent upon the requirements of a "power struggle"? Certain passages in the play suggest that we should not be entirely unprepared for such an eventuality, and once again I refer to Pelayo as the character who may be pointing out the truth.

When Sancho and Nuño first consider going to ask the King to intercede, Sancho asks Pelayo if he will accompany him to the Court. Pelayo, in his reply, ends with the words:

Dicen que es una talega
donde junta los trebejos
para jugar la fortuna,
tantos blancos como negros. (1235-9)

The Court is a chessboard, "where destiny with men for pieces plays." Within the context of devious political manoeuvering which seems to shape this play (and its historical source), the metaphor seems extraordinarily apt, and I presumably need not elaborate the obvious. Suffice it to remember that in chess (the rules of which have not changed since the sixteenth century, according to my encyclopaedia), the whole game is ultimately dependent on the safety of the King: the King must be defended at all costs (even the Queen may be sacrificed!) and the game is won, lost, or stalemate, according to the fate of the King; no other piece is of any consequence in the final analysis, and all other pieces are a means to an end. And we all know the connotations of the word peón in everyday language.[19] As regards Pelayo's description, we also know that, in this play, Lope is "fortuna", and that he is manipulating the King, the Knights, the pawns, etc.; this seems quite important, because the chessboard is not an analogy of real life, since the pieces on a chessboard do not move of their own free will

[19] One meaning given in the Diccionario de Autoridades is, "El que en las obras mercenarias trabaja por su jornal, o en cosas materiales, que no piden arte ni habilidad" - not as powerful as the English correlation of "pawn" and "victim", but sufficient to suit the metaphor.

as men do; however, as an analogy of the play the concept is valid, for the manipulator (Lope) is offering us a lesson in the game, a lesson which goes beyond trite analogies to suggest how it is that men with free wills and immortal souls can sometimes seem to be only pieces on a chessboard.

Later, in Act III, Pelayo is bragging to Nuño about their chances of success in the forthcoming judicial proceedings, and compares what is happening with a card game, in which Don Tello has a good card, but not as good a card as the ace which Pelayo and Sancho hold:

> ¿Matar? ¡Oh, qué bueno es eso!
> ¿Nunca habéis jugado al triunfo?
> Haced cuenta que don Tello
> ha metido la malilla;
> pues la espadilla traemos. (1964-8)

Sancho tells Pelayo to hold his tongue, because he can see what Pelayo means by referring to the unbeatable card; Nuño does not understand, but we do, and what ought to stick in our minds is that card games are essentially games of chance. In this game, Sancho and Pelayo have been dealt the ace and so take the trick, but it is clear that we cannot always expect a mission such as this - however just the cause - to be successful. Once again, we also have to bear in mind that Lope is "chance," and the same inferences may be drawn from this image as from the chessboard image. There does seem to be a warning in the play that we should note these images, in

that Don Tello has an image in his house which he conspicuously fails to ignore; I refer to the tapestry Pelayo describes, which depicts a King trying to kill one of his subjects, ("Baúl cuando al Badil matar quería" [v. 1401-15]).

From all this, there seems to emerge a pattern in which the King is shown, not so much as the representative of scrupulous justice and impartial morality, cleansing the society of a man who, temporarily, opposes such concepts, but as a man behaving very much like Don Tello himself; and the more one considers the modes of speech and behaviour of the two men, the more apparent become the similarities between them.

The fundamental similarity lies in the decisive force of wealth and power in enforcing one's law on society, and the way in which it is used. Don Tello's advantage, which drove Sancho to distraction, was that his own wealth and power, and hence his law, were unchallenged in Galicia. The King is eventually able to bring down Don Tello because the King has behind him even greater wealth and power. Perhaps Lope is suggesting that when, at the end of the first Court scene, he shows us the King giving to Sancho his letter (which proves ineffective), while giving to Pelayo a bag of gold coins (vv. 1483-6); it is also noteworthy that, at the end of the play, the King divides Don Tello's wealth (between Feliciana

and Elvira). What determines the outcome of the contest, then, is not a difference in kind but a difference in degree: the King is "bigger" than Don Tello; the procedures adopted by both men are basically the same.

Comparing their procedures, we find that, for one thing, the King apparently has to resort to various kinds of subterfuge - secrecy, lies, etc. - in order to work his will, just as Don Tello has to - cf. the abduction scene, and the game he plays with Sancho and Nuño until Elvira steps out of hiding, for examples - in order to work his will, until such tactics cease to be useful (which may also be said of the King). Another point concerns the reliance on words and customs to present the case in a desired light. Don Tello reduces himself to the level of an imbecile by constantly relying on absurd word-plays (cf. his argument with Elvira at the beginning of Act II, his exchange with Nuño - "Vosotros sois los tiranos" [1871] - in Act III, etc.) to justify his position morally, and on dubious customs to justify his position socially. These are the symptoms of a mind disordered or clouded by violent and uncontrolled (but not uncontrollable) passions: first lust, then pride and rage. But the King, to accomplish his aims, relies on the custom of executing traitors, and relies on his own interpretation (i.e. on his own word-usage) of both the law and the crime

to show that Don Tello deserves his end. It seems to me (and to the King's aides), as suggested above, that this charge of treason is open to question; of course Don Tello is nominally guilty of treason, but only nominally - or, to put it another way, only legally. If we have listened to the language of the protagonists, especially of the King, and considered carefully their actions, we must surely begin to understand the impossibility - or dishonesty - of reducing human behaviour to legal formulae; Lope has demonstrated this in an explicit and emphatic fashion with Don Tello; now he is letting us see a similar distortion perpetrated by the King, while at the same time allowing us to view the King, if we so wish, as a guardian of truth and justice. Yet such a view, to my mind, can only be sustained if we accept the King's words and actions at their face-value - the final irony being, that face-values are not necessarily worthless, and indeed are not in this case.

To reinforce this point I would again refer to the second court-scene, in which Sancho tells the King what happened when he took the royal letter to Don Tello. The tone of the King's "¿debió de rompella?" (1700) displays - unless I am reading too much into it - almost an eagerness for confirmation, the kind of question which speakers of classical Latin preface with a "Nonne ..." Sancho's answer sums up

everything I am implying: "No, he didn't tear up the letter, but it wouldn't be difficult to say that he did" is the gist of it (1705-8 quoted above), and the King's approval of this judgement (1721-2 quoted above) - a judgement which could be made of anyone guilty of the slightest misdemeanour - is then put into effect. A few minutes later, as this scene closes, this malleability of language is commented on via - who else? - Pelayo, who takes the King's instructions ("no habéis de quitar/ de los labios los dedos" [1761-2]) absolutely literally, and has to be told by the King that the words did not mean precisely what they said:

> PELAYO. Señor, los tendré tan quedos,
> que no osaré bostezar.
> Pero su merced, mirando
> con piedad mi suficiencia,
> me ha de dar una licencia
> de comer de cuando en cuando.
> REY. No se entiende que has de estar
> siempre la mano en la boca. (1763-70)

Later, Pelayo puts into practice the lessons he learns here: when Nuño tries to prise from him the secret of the pesquisidor's identity (1992 ff.), Pelayo conceals the truth by confusing the issue with words ("Es un hombre de buen seso,/ descolorido, encendido; [etc.]" [2000-2008]) - and this, we remember, is in order to obey the King. Pelayo's defence of "esas malicias" (2024) is loaded with irony: "¿No vengo/ de la corte? ¿Qué se espanta?" (2024-5) - spoken, let it be

noted, just before the entry of the King and his aides!

At the end, when Don Tello's behaviour is brought to a halt, the absurd justification to which he clings, "No fué su mujer, señor," (2275), is finally destroyed by the King's making the obvious point, "Basta que lo quiso ser" (2276). Don Tello's words had obscured the truth, the King's words now restore truth; but, the reason why the King's words carry greater weight is not because of the power of the words but because of the power of the King. Even the King's next utterance is a silly lie: Nuño did not complain to the King himself, but - presumably to satisfy a legal aspect of the case (cf. Don Tello, "Cuando se quejara Nuño,/ estuviera disculpado" [1505-6], and v. my chapter on Fuente-ovejuna, above, footnote 15) - the King says that he did.

Finally, the King duplicates what was perhaps Don Tello's worst crime: the refusal to have mercy. Don Tello denied pity to Sancho, to Nuño, and of course to Elvira - not surprisingly, since, in his disordered state, his conception of pity was expressed to Celio thus: "Tuviera [Elvira] de mí piedad,/ Celio, y no la forzara" (1903-4). The closing scene of the play represents the discussion on justice and mercy to which I have already referred, in which the three other members of the nobility present (Conde, don Enrique, and Feliciana) try to persuade the King to modify

his sentence on Don Tello; but the King decided long before that Don Tello had committed a capital offence. Is it significant that the King refers to "mi justicia" (2383 - reminiscent of Don Tello's "soy quien soy" [1580 ff.]) rather than to "la justicia"? Perhaps not, since his next words are:

> Cuando pierde de su punto/
> la justicia, no se acierta
> en admitir la piedad:
> divinas y humanas letras
> dan ejemplos (2387-91)

- but, as already noted, this latter statement cannot go unchallenged. For one thing, justice without mercy is the Old Law, from which men are supposed to have been freed by the New Law, of the Gospels, which rejects retribution for mercy and forgiveness. For another thing, while "divinas y humanas letras" do give examples of merciless justice, they also give examples of the opposite, even in the Old Testament - the tapestry Pelayo saw in Don Tello's house represents one such example, for Saul's persecution of David dragged on for a long time, and yet the episode ended in reconciliation and mutual forgiveness (v. I Samuel, 18-24), even if not permanently.

The King, it seems, is determined to have his way, and whereas for Sancho the metaphor of cutting down the tallest tree could only remain a metaphor, the King is able

to convert it into reality. As we watch the final scene, we may well feel that Don Tello emerges from it with far greater credit than does the King. We may also feel that Sancho's closing words, although they are the standard valediction to the audience, carry overtones of irony in their reference to "el mejor alcalde," and particularly in the next words, "historia/ que afirma por verdadera/ la corónica de España" (2407-9), since we find, upon reading the latter, that it is somewhat dissimilar from the story Lope has presented. To recapitulate briefly, it appears that the justice we have been watching is a justice in which the judge (who is described as the best judge) indulges in procedures which not only cannot be regarded as satisfactory, but which also bear an uncomfortable resemblance to the behaviour of the criminal; it also appears that the justice which is done, and which we have to approve - redress and reinstatement for the peasants -, comes about because it happens to coincide with the interests of the most powerful party.

All that is not, however, leading to the conclusion that Lope is writing in order to "expose" the improprieties of men in authority: the truth we are being shown is more difficult to face than that. Having just seen the similarities between Don Tello and the King, we ought now to recall the similarities we were able to observe between Don Tello

and the peasants; this is where the detailed examination of the first peasant scenes again becomes relevant. In those scenes we saw, albeit in a comic and innocuous context, the peasants doing the same sort of thing as we have seen Don Tello and the King doing. The peasants, too, found it necessary to conceal the truth, even in the pursuit of natural justice; they too played games of secrecy and dissimulation; they were happy to rely on, and profit from, custom; and they too were not very careful about the meanings of the words they used, sometimes finding it convenient to justify themselves via a convenient catchphrase. All this was amongst lovers, relatives, and friends, while the only one prepared to call a spade a spade, Pelayo, was continually rebuffed. These aspects are part of the "justice" of the peasant world, just as all the political tricks are part of the justice of the noble world, and all these aspects of the peasant world are shown us even before it is subject to the perversion brought about by Don Tello; even on the most simple level of society in the most simple relationships between people, truth and justice are seen to be at the mercy of the most inconspicuous forces (and the opportunity for showing this is another advantage derived from changing the crime from dispossession to abduction). Small wonder that, when Don Tello does go haywire, the peasants too are driven farther from natural justice, as,

for instance, when Sancho becomes as unreasoning as Don Tello (801 ff., 1138 ff., etc.), when the father-daughter relationship of Nuño and Elvira is distorted (1777 ff.), and so forth.

This perversion of justice throughout all levels of society is best exemplified by the way in which all these protagonists, volint nolint, try to punish or take vengeance on each other. It begins in the opening scenes, with Elvira and Sancho and their lovers' games, in which latter there is the inevitable streak of lovers' cruelty, with Elvira's comment that "amor todo es venganzas" (270); the amazing thing about that situation is that it is reproduced in the relationship between Don Tello and Elvira, as becomes evident to the audience for the first time in Act II,

> Si alcanza
> mi fe lo que ha pretendido,
> el amor que le he tenido
> se ha de trocar en venganza, (1303-6)

later to represent, in Act III, the final depths of Don Tello's disorder:

> Ya es tema, si amor ha sido;
> que aunque Elvira no es Tamar,
> a ella le ha de pesar,
> y a mí vengarme su olvido. (1923-6)

What is amazing is not, that love should turn to vengeance in the mind of the unbalanced Don Tello, but that the same thing should appear so normal and comical in the natural relationship between Sancho and Elvira. This possibility of punishment in

relationships between loved ones is again brought out in the scene just mentioned above between Nuño and Elvira, where Nuño is actually disowning Elvira because the unfortunate girl is, not the perpetrator, but the victim of a crime. Meanwhile, we are repeatedly shown the peasants' vindictiveness towards Pelayo.

Higher on the social scale, the will to exact punishment of one kind or another is more obvious, in the behaviour of Don Tello towards Elvira, Sancho, Nuño and even his sister (e.g. "¡Mira que te he de perder/ el respeto, Feliciana!" [2157-8]), and of course in the behaviour of the King. The effect all this has on the workings of justice may be seen in the experiences of Sancho: when the King decides to render him aid in the case, Sancho is, naturally, overwhelmed with admiration for him - just as he was, equally naturally, overwhelmed with admiration for Don Tello when the latter offered him similar generosity. It seems that, for peasant as well as King, "justice" means "that which conforms with my self-interest"; that may be a truism of any society. But we cannot just ignore it; the audience is, after all, shown another offer of gifts in the play, by Don Tello to Elvira (1277-90), which we know is morally unacceptable because the end involved means making a whore of Elvira, and yet for which Don Tello is able to claim society's approval

(743-5 quoted above) - point being, that calling something a truism does not absolve us from the responsibility of making a judgement on ourselves.

What we see in the play, as in Fuenteovejuna, is the whole spectrum of the social order - King, Court nobles, landed gentry, ex-landed gentry, peasant farmers, servants, and the village "clown", - and almost all of them are behaving in more or less the same way. Each section is introduced as fulfilling its role responsibly, but this never lasts long: the peasants have their natural justice - but love becomes "venganzas"; Don Tello personifies justice in the noble world - but munificence turns to bribery; the King's first action causes the Conde to extol his "suma clemencia" - but the same Conde later asks the King, unavailingly, "Pues la piedad, ¿es bajeza?" (2386). What the King does is shown to be only an enlargement of what Don Tello does, which is an exaggeration of what the peasants do, and they do what the King does, etc. etc., while, ultimately, justice comes to those who hold the strongest cards.

Within that context, the difficulties attaching to the concept of liberty as obedience to just law scarcely need to be enumerated, for the law is only as good as those who administer it, and is therefore associated with the basic concept of liberty as the possession of reason and choice, which,

as we know, ceases to be liberty as soon as choice repudiates reason. The denial of liberty within Don Tello has already been examined, as has the lesser extent to which it is apparent in Sancho and Elvira. It remains to point out the ironies of the resulting destruction of the liberty which depends on just relationships between all these protagonists, recalling, for the sake of clarity, that we are not discussing moral liberty (the permanent voluntary choice of the good which is not normally attainable in this life), but natural liberty, which is our ability to choose good *via* reason (as opposed to being coerced by instinct), and which, in society, entails the voluntary obedience to just law.

One of these ironies was noted earlier, that everyone does "the right thing", but everything goes wrong. Don Tello obeys what he feels is a just law (that he should only marry his equal), yet becomes disordered and dangerous because of the onus it lays on him; Sancho obeys Nuño - who, in making the suggestion, is also mindful of just law - in reporting his marriage to the *señor*; the natural liberty of all concerned should be protected by all this, but it is destroyed, because, just once, instinct proved stronger than reason and Don Tello had to stop the wedding. As a result of that, Don Tello claimed he was obeying the social law, in having to force himself upon Elvira rather than marrying her, but that

is where the whole idea of obedience to law becomes unsatisfactory, for it is where the limitation of law - namely, that it is expressed in human language - becomes apparent. Don Tello may be right in claiming that he is obeying the law (and who is to say that the law is unjust?), and yet, this obedience is being used to excuse what is essentially a loss of liberty in himself (<u>via</u> submission to instinct instead of to reason), as well as a denial of the liberty of Elvira, who is being told to obey that which is morally unjust but which Don Tello can call socially just.

Nuño, too, feels he is obeying a social law when he insults, threatens, and rejects Elvira in Act III; it is the same kind of social law as that to which Don Tello refers in his attempts to defend his actions (e.g. 741-7 quoted above), and they cannot <u>both</u> be just; in fact, of course, neither is: both offend natural justice and there can be no liberty in obedience to them; yet these are the kind of silly beliefs which many in the audience would no doubt take seriously. Just how silly they are is emphasised by the fact that it is Elvira who shows Nuño that obedience to such laws is absurd (and hence nothing to do with liberty): she is the one who is suffering most (even being deprived of her physical liberty), precisely because of Tello's adherence to the same kind of law. Shortly after that scene, Celio attempts to reason with Don

Tello:

CELIO. Señor, lo que intentas mira.
D. TELLO. No mira quien está ciego.
CELIO. Que repares bien te ruego,
que forzalla es crueldad.
D. TELLO. Tuviera de mí piedad,
Celio, y yo no la forzara.
CELIO. Estimo por cosa rara
su defensa y castidad (1899-1906)

- an obviously futile endeavour in view of Tello's loss of liberty, but Nuño, too, because of his belief in the social customs, had ignored a similar lesson from Celio:

CELIO. No tenéis qué temer, que ella resiste
con gallardo valor y valentía
de mujer, que es mayor cuando porfía.
NUÑO. Y ¿podré yo creer que honor mantiene
mujer que en su poder un hombre tiene?
CELIO. Pues es tanta verdad, que si quisiera
Elvira que su esposo Celio fuera,
tan seguro con ella me casara,,
como si en vuestra casa la tuviera.
(1780-88)

How can there be such a thing as liberty when one of its requisites - obedience - is frequently a source of its denial?

The cruellest irony, perhaps, is that, as in El Alcalde de Zalamea, the innocent person who suffers most, Elvira, is the one who is least guilty of transgression of law or perversion of liberty. She is probably the closest to moral liberty: she obeys that which it is right to obey, and, far more difficult, refuses to obey that which it is clearly wrong to obey, in spite of enormous pressure on her to do so, in spite of her own father's lack of trust in her, in spite

of the pressure of an instinct that can easily overcome reason, namely, fear; her only fall from grace (her tryst with Sancho), in contrast, is occasioned by a more worthy passion. Yet she is the one who is imprisoned, assaulted, threatened with death and raped, and her attempts to choose according to reason and nature, to reject the pressure of instinct within herself, are abortive, because another person's instincts are combined with a greater strength than she can muster, because this is, as Feliciana says, a battle, "Descansad, y volveréis/ a la batalla" (977-8), and one which she cannot win alone. She, too, must finally ask the King for justice; her liberty is also dependent on the King, and that is not a reassuring thought.

For all concerned, then, liberty depends on the law and justice of the King. When Sancho first went to see the King, it was only in obedience to Nuño, "Por tu gusto te obedezco" (1224), who was seeking justice in preference to anarchy. But Nuño, as we have seen, almost invariably suggests that which is right in theory but wrong in practice. When we watch Sancho going to seek justice from the King, we know that this can also mean that we are going to see if liberty is possible <u>at all</u> in human society; at first, it appears that it is not, but later, when justice - of a sort - is done for Sancho, liberty is presumably assured. However,

that is where all the qualifications of justice, described above, again become important, for we can only say that obedience means liberty in this case; even in this case, though, both the justice and the liberty are far from unequivocal, and, as for other cases, we cannot know what might happen. We certainly cannot avoid the problem that obedience must always be to an intermediary, not directly to the King himself, so that the possibilities of liberty through obedience are, for ordinary people, as varied as the seniors whom they must obey, and, given all the problems of truth and deception that we have seen in even the most intimate relationships, the obstacles are plainly formidable.

The most important aspect of the King's behaviour in this regard, though, is his manipulation (as it appears to me) of the language of the law. Human law purports to represent the application of rational principles to specific circumstances; Lope shows us, in Fuenteovejuna, how distortions of language represent distortions of reason and law, and we can see there the consequences for liberty. Unlike the Comendador, Alfonso VII is not disordered and licentious - quite the reverse; but, notwithstanding, law and reason are shown to be ambiguous. Therefore, although human liberty is theoretically assured by obedience to just law, we have to infer from Lope's work that such liberty is not completely assured thereby.

The comparison with Fuenteovejuna needs emphasising, in that Fernán Gómez is obviously guilty of twisting reason and law, obviously destructive of liberty; with Alfonso VII, on the other hand (as, to a lesser degree, with Fernando el Católico), Lope shows that the fallibility of reason and law can be made far less obvious, and that it can be used by men who are anything but unbalanced.[20] The qualifications attendant upon our liberty are thus shown to be further-reaching than might appear if we were to consider only extraordinary situations such as that faced by the inhabitants of Fuenteovejuna; that facet of the condition of human liberty is shown more clearly in Calderón's El Alcalde de Zalamea, and, indeed, the interdependence of liberty, language and reason will become increasingly apparent in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

[20] Salomon, asserting that the peasants had confidence in the law and the King, says, "Pour eux, face aux seigneurs et aux nobles, la royauté représentait la liberté et la justice" (op. cit., p. 908), but I think that Lope shows the situation to be far less straightforward.

Chapter III

Calderón's EL ALCALDE DE ZALAMEA

"For Calderón, as for Shakespeare, Nature ... Law ... Reason ... are deeply interwoven",[1] and in El Alcalde de Zalamea there is, as Dunn goes on to say, an "implicit concern with law - human, natural, divine."[2] In particular, the play is concerned with the nature of human justice, with its imperfections and limitations, and their causes. The plot suggests a fundamental ambivalence involving the old problem of means and ends: human law may bring about a "just" end in a case, but the means to that end may be considered unsatisfactory from a moral or legal standpoint. In this play, therefore, the relationship between man's imperfect law and his imperfect liberty may be usefully examined.

I propose to devote the first part of this chapter

[1] P. N. Dunn, "Patrimonio del alma," Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, XLI, 1964, pp. 78-85, p.78. Dunn offers excellent explanations of some of the play's problems, v. also "Honour and the Christian background in Calderon," Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, XXXVII, 1960, pp. 75-105, and his Introduction and notes to the Pergamon Press edition of the play (Edinburgh, 1966), which is the edition to which my references refer.

[2] "Patrimonio del Alma," p. 84.

to a survey of various aspects of human law as they appear in Calderón's presentation of law and justice in action. The problems may be seen with reference to individuals, to the relationship between civil justice and military justice, and, from these, to the workings of human law and justice as shown *via* Pedro Crespo's actions and achievements. The second part of the chapter will provide an analysis of the problems of liberty reflected in the above. It will be realised that, although discussion of liberty comprises the smaller part of the chapter, its problems are implicit in the difficulties of human justice, which must be examined first.

The most obvious example of injustice in an individual is the Captain, Don Álvaro, described by Dunn as representing "law turned to self-assertion";[3] as that facet of the Captain's character has been adequately studied already, there is no point in reviewing it here. It is worth pointing out, though, how the corruption of the Captain is involved with, and reflected by, the disorder of his subordinates in the lower ranks of the army. It is exemplified by the insubordination of Rebolledo, and his talk of desertion, and by Chispa's designs on the gambling concession. Calderón makes the dramatic connection between the two levels of rank by making the

[3] *El Alcalde de Zalamea*, ed. cit., Introduction, p. 22.

Captain exchange favours with Rebolledo: he gives Rebolledo charge of the boliche (which Rebolledo will delegate to Chispa), thereby obliging Rebolledo to assist him in breaking into Isabel's room (v. I, 602-648). Indeed, the Captain avails himself of Rebolledo precisely because

> este soldado, que es más despejado,
> él fingirá mejor lo que he trazado. (I, 604-5)

The disorder and corruption amongst the lower ranks continues after Chispa has become bolichera. She is accused of cheating and slashes a man with a knife, as she tells Rebolledo when he asks what the quarrel was about:

> CHISPA. Sobre hacerme alicantina
> del barato de hora y media
> que estuvo echando las bolas,
> teniéndome muy atenta
> a si eran pares o nones. (II, 161-5)

Shortly afterwards, Chispa and Rebolledo are aiding and abetting the Captain in his attempts to attract Isabel's attention (391 ff.), and Chispa, saying "Agora estoy en mi centro" (II, 395), reminds us of the violent confusion of the elements inherent in the Captain's disordered personality, and thereby includes herself in the disorder.

Significantly, the general indiscipline and disorder of Rebolledo and company is used, in the opening scenes of the play, to draw our attention to some of the intrinsic difficulties of human law and justice. The soldiers complain about

the corruption of their superiors; apparently, when the soldiers arrive at a town where they are to be billeted, the officers accept the bribes of the alcaldes who offer enough:

> que si es que se pueden ir, [the soldiers]
> que darán lo necesario. (I, 23-4)

The footsore soldiers then have to keep marching, while the officers pocket their gains. But, while the soldiers complain about corruption, they also display a lack of enthusiasm for their commander, Don Lope de Figueroa, because his methods of enforcing the law are ruthlessly efficient:

> ... sabe hacer
> justicia del más amigo
> sin fulminar el proceso. (I, 56-8)

We are shown two aspects of the same concept, human justice, but neither represents the ideal. Amongst the soldiers, justice provokes only cynicism and mockery, as expressed in Rebolledo's and Chispa's puns on legal terms, used to introduce a sardonic jacarandina:

> CHISPA. Responda a esa petición
> citada la castañeta.
> REBOLLEDO. Y yo ayudaré también.
> Sentencien los camaradas
> todas las partes citadas. (I, 95-99)

In legal language, responder means "to answer a summons," petición means "a demand", citado means "summoned", sentenciar means "to give the verdict", and parte means "a party in a lawsuit."

When justice is mocked by these puns, we may become aware that while, on the one hand, such mockery from a rabble of conscripts does not tell us very much, on the other hand, justice may be mocked by puns in a more serious way; for puns are plays on words, and words are the vehicles of human law. So perhaps, we may feel at this point, human justice can become dependent on word-plays.

At the end of the play, singing and punning are brought together again by these same characters, in the last lines before the valediction:

> REBOLLEDO: Yo no pienso ya cantar
> en mi vida.
> CHISPA: Pues yo sí,
> cuantas veces a mirar
> llegue el pasado instrumento. (III, 974-7)

Rebolledo is referring to the singing in the street (beneath Isabel's window) for which he and Chispa were recognised and arrested by Crespo (v. III, 596-634) - Crespo being the first to employ the ambiguity of <u>cantar</u> ("... un instrumento/ tengo en que cantéis mejor" [III, 601-2]). Chispa, though, is referring to her statements made to Crespo under threat of torture, just as an English-speaking criminal might use the word "sing." Crespo is then made to reply, "<u>Con que</u> fin el autor da/ a esta historia verdadera" (III, 978-9 - my underlining). What happens in between the quoted extracts shows that it is with good reason that Calderón introduces, at the very beginning

and at the very end of the play, the ideas mooted above.

The other problem of human justice presented in the opening scenes concerns Don Lope and Pedro Crespo. From the soldiers, we hear opinions regarding both men. Don Lope, Rebolledo tells us,

> ... si tiene tanta loa
> de animoso y de valiente,
> la tiene también de ser
> el hombre más desalmado,
> jurador y renegado
> del mundo, ... (I, 51-6)

A moment later, the Sergeant comes back from the village to tell us about Crespo:

> he oído que es el más vano
> hombre del mundo, y que tiene
> más pompa y más presunción
> que un infante de León. (I, 168-171)

How much truth is there in these opinions? Don Lope, described as "desalmado," later demonstrates genuine concern and affection for all three members of the Crespo family. Crespo is described as vain and pompous, but by whom? It is the sort of opinion we might expect from Don Mendo, who calls Crespo a "villano malicioso" (I, 409); it is not necessarily, therefore, an unbiased assessment of Crespo.

Through such situations we are being shown the fallibility of human witness, and human witness is another of the factors on which human justice depends. Later, Rebolledo and Chispa testify against the Captain, but it is under the threat

of torture and death:

> CRESPO. Resolveos a decir ...
> REBOLLEDO. ¿Qué?
> CRESPO. cuanto anoche pasó ...
> REBOLLEDO. Tu hija mejor que yo
> lo sabe.
> CRESPO. o has de morir (III, 603-6)

and the validity of such witness is further shown to be questionable when Chispa is confronted with the same choice:

> CRESPO. Resolveos a decir
> vuestros dichos.
> CHISPA. Sí, diremos
> y aun más de lo que sabemos;
> que peor será morir. (III, 623-6)

Unreliable enough in normal circumstances, human witness as adduced in such legal proceedings is even less likely to elicit truth.

As we watch the dramatic situations being put before us, we are ourselves being made witnesses. We listen to all the opinions expressed, but we have to avoid being conditioned by any of them - soldiers, officers, peasants or nobility - if our capacities for judgement are to remain unimpaired. As regards Don Lope and Pedro Crespo, for example, we have to realise that they are both men of principle, but men who also have to pay heed to pressures and circumstances which may necessitate that principles be compromised. That much can be seen in the juridical conflict around which the plot revolves, with both men having to take account of both criteria and events,

and it is also shown to be a problem in the wider context of human justice in general.

The juridical conflict between Don Lope and Pedro Crespo is brought into the open when Don Lope arrives at the end of Act I. The argument between the two men serves to illustrate the conflict: Crespo asserts his right to attack the Captain, and Don Lope denies that right, while both invoke threats of death to reinforce their stance (I, 850-68). We have witnessed the events about which they are arguing (the Captain's breaking into Isabel's room), and we know that Crespo has a point; we also know that Don Lope can legitimately claim that the Captain is his responsibility alone. Ideally, the two jurisdictions, the civil and the military, should work in harmony, having, on the moral level at least, the same aims and the same means. Here, they clearly do not harmonise, and we should ask ourselves why that is so.

The answer is suggested by what we have seen so far. We already know that Crespo is proud of being "si bien de limpio linaje,/ hombre llano" (I, 490-1), happy to fulfil his natural station in life as best he can, and conscious - and jealous - of his <u>opinión</u>. His attempt to conceal Isabel from the soldiers is a facet of his customary prudence, but events beyond his control render his precautions abortive - worse, they aggravate his difficulties, cf. the Captain: "y sólo

porque el viejo la ha guardado,/ deseo, vive Dios, de entrar me ha dado ..." (I, 591-2) - and, when that happens, he has to tread warily, tempering with caution his desire to defend his family and his name. We also know that Don Lope is a busy man with a job to do, many responsibilities, an invasion to launch, a King in the offing, and a painful leg; he is understandably anxious not to become involved in, or to have his men become involved in, needless altercations with civilians; when that happens, the interests of his army must take precedence.

Those are the kind of conditions which impair the satisfactory workings of human law, and which qualify the terms used by the protagonists in the dispute. Don Lope, for instance, is within his legal rights in taking to extremes the separation of the military and civil jurisdictions:

> A quien tocara
> ni aun al soldado menor,
> sólo un pelo de la ropa,
> por vida del cielo, yo
> le ahorcara, (I, 861-5)

but separate jurisdiction does not confer on the military the right to break civil and moral law at the civilian's expense. Crespo may have no right to take action against the Captain, but Don Lope has both the right and the responsibility, as he tacitly admits by, for example, ordering Don Álvaro's company out of Zalamea (v. II, 481-494), and <u>via</u> his arguments in

Act III, e.g.,

> justicia la parte espere
> de mí; que tambien sé yo
> degollar, si es necesario. (III, 761-3)

Yet, Don Lope does not discharge his responsibility adequately. In the first instance, moving the Captain out of town is scarcely sufficient to keep him away from Isabel, especially as Don Lope is going to Guadalupe the same day, "... a prevenir/ todo el tercio" (II, 554-5), and will therefore be quite unable to support the theoretical force of his rank. In the second instance, the phrase "si es necesario" is a limitless qualification, for Don Lope's assessments of what is necessary and what can be done are very much conditioned by the circumstances of everyday life, the like of which I mentioned in the previous paragraph. The suggestion is even perceptible that one of the causes of his impatient disposition is the pain of his old leg-wound, which is constantly with him and which is referred to almost every time he appears - as in his very first scene, when he summarily clears up an unpleasant situation, his words implying that the short shrift he gives the protagonists is a product of his short temper:

> ¿No me basta haber subido
> hasta aquí con el dolor
> desta pierna, — que los diablos
> llevaran, amén, — sino
> no decirme: "Aquesto ha sido"? (I, 789-793)

The important point of all that is that the conditions and circumstances mentioned are perfectly normal: yet the workings of law and justice are plainly subject to them.

An analysis of the staging helps to highlight some of the above problems, and the "break-in" scene provides a good example. In his first appearance, Crespo lectures Juan about the importance of opinión and honor (I, 424-521): a man should keep his word and not get into debt, "porque ... tu opinión no falte" (I, 457-8), while "honor postizo" is worthless (I, 517), to which Juan replies that the latter is not worthless if some advantage is to be gained therefrom. But in a practical situation - the "break-in" scene - their attitudes are reversed: Juan wants to uphold the family honour at sword-point, while Crespo feigns acceptance of the Captain's story (I, 721-773). Why does Crespo compromise the natural law and social principle whose superiority he previously asserted? Presumably, in order to play down the incident and protect Juan; thus, when Juan and Don Álvaro draw their swords, Crespo steps between them as peacemaker, emphasising his action with his words: "Ved que yo estoy/ de por medio" (I, 772-3).

That is the scene which confronts Don Lope when he bursts in, and the onus of distributing justice passes from Crespo to Don Lope. Human witness then begins to confuse the issue. Don Lope wants to know what has happened - "¿Qué ha

habido? ¿Qué ha sucedido?" (I, 785). Crespo ducks the question - "Todo esto es nada, señor" (I, 794). Don Lope demands the truth - "Hablad, decid la verdad" (I, 795) - and the Captain tells lies (I, 796-806). Rebolledo, his case unheard, is condemned on the strength of the Captain's testimony - "Denle dos tratos de cuerda" (I, 815). The truth then emerges, but only because of Rebolledo's fear of the pain to which he has been sentenced:

> ¿Cómo no
> lo he de decir, pues si callo
> los brazos me pondrán hoy
> atrás como mal soldado?
> - El Capitán me mandó
> que fingiese la pendencia,
> para tener ocasión
> de entrar aquí. (I, 822-29)

Don Lope's only decision is to change the Captain's billet. Everyone leaves except Don Lope and Crespo, and the latter, having wisely compromised his principles in practice, now re-affirms them in theory:

> A quien se atreviera
> a un átomo de mi honor,
> por vida también del cielo,
> que también le ahorcara yo, (I, 865-8)

an attitude which Crespo justifies by way of his famous aphorism,

> Al Rey la hacienda y la vida
> se ha de dar; pero el honor
> es patrimonio del alma,
> y el alma sólo es de Dios. (I, 873-6)

As Dunn has pointed out, Crespo's "patrimonio del

alma," as a principle, conveys a vital and fundamental truth which does not require recapitulation here. Within the immediate context of the play, though, it is a debating point, a general principle adduced to befog a particular issue. Whatever Crespo means by "honor" - and there are indications that he is overly concerned with mere reputation - there is something wrong when duties to God and King do not coincide; theoretically, the King is both God's representative and the fount of honour in the state, and Crespo would need to do a lot more talking to prove that his "honor" has nothing to do with man-made laws. We have, after all, just watched Crespo showing how principles of honour must be adapted to take account of other pressures, and his fine-sounding declamation must seem less unequivocal when we hear his next remark, in reply to Don Lope's "vais teniendo razón": "Sí, ¡juro a Cristo! porque/ siempre la he tenido yo" (I, 878-80). Crespo's appeal to ideals, in context, is a case of confusing a general truth with a particular truth, and, as such, is an instance of the serious aspect of the ambiguity of language, whose lighter aspects we saw in the soldiers' puns. The implication for human law may be seen in Don Lope's acceptance of the proposition. Don Lope is a man who does not have much time for the subtleties and ambiguities of language, as is shown by some of his comments to Crespo, e.g.,

¿Sabéis que estáis obligado
a sufrir, por ser quien sois,
estas cargas? (I, 869-71)

in which there is some truth, but not enough to vindicate the outrageous behaviour of the Captain. Don Lope, it seems, is easily convinced by the form of words; yet he wields considerable legal authority over both soldiers and civilians.

Already, we may begin to see the effect that words can have on the quality of justice. In the above situation, the arguments of both men contain both truth and falsehood; the tension between the moral and the social aspects of the play, and the disharmony between the two jurisdictions, are consequences of that ambiguity. Calderón makes the point comically in the last moments of the act: the only field in which the soldier and the civilian fully understand each other is in cursing and swearing (I, 857-892).

The same series of conditions and qualifications that I have outlined continue to affect the behaviour of Don Lope and Crespo in Act II, still within their separate jurisdictions. Thus they are forced to act separately, instead of in concert, when their supper is disrupted by the soldiers' singing: Don Lope is trying to uphold the honour of the army (and of the Crespos), and Crespo is trying to keep Don Lope from seeing that he feels insulted (II, 319-390). They both want to do the same thing - stop the disorder - but their

motives are part dubious, part admirable, and, although their interests should coincide, they end up fighting each other (albeit unwittingly). When they reveal themselves, Crespo's explanation for being in the fight (having bidden Don Lope "Buenas noches," [II, 381]) is: "Sean disculpa y respuesta/ hacer lo que vos hicisteis" (II, 465-6). At face value, that would seem to be an admirable example of soldier and peasant acting in concert; but they have both come from the garden, where we saw exactly what Crespo's following of Don Lope's example involves, namely, grimly trying to keep up appearances, in the face of what he sees as humiliation, by pretending that his actions are a response to those of Don Lope. Heeven takes the game as far as feigning empathy with Don Lope's physical pain:

> que en toda la noche pude
> dormir, en la pierna vuestra
> pensando, y amanecí
> con dolor en ambas piernas. (II, 247-50)

Truth and falsehood again mingle deceptively, for in another sense Crespo's reactions <u>are</u> dependent on Don Lope as well as on the other circumstances, for the other circumstances are partly Don Lope's responsibility. And when Don Lope replies to Crespo, "Aquésta era ofensa mía,/ vuestra no" (II, 467-8), we know that that is not the whole truth either, for the situation definitely does concern Crespo. Although neither of the

two men is crooked, their playing with various kinds of truth undermines the ideals we know to exist; civil and military should not clash, but tension between them exists because each is circumscribed by different pressures. The tailoring of ideals to the pattern dictated by circumstance is a facet of the condition of human justice as a whole, to the play's presentation of which I would now like to devote some space.

With the departure of Don Lope for Guadalupe and the Captain's subsequent abduction of Isabel, the demonstration of Crespo's justice begins, when civil law is delivered into his hands. Here we are shown just how equivocal and unsatisfactory may be the means by which a just end is brought about.

At the beginning of Act III the spectator is probably in sympathy with Crespo, imagining the emotions aroused in the latter by the rape of Isabel and by his own (legal) impotence. He brings Isabel back to the village, having declined to kill her as custom law might have dictated, and when he swears to kill the Captain at all costs ("... el ansia mía/ no ha de parar hasta darle/ la muerte" [III, 306-8]), we are unlikely to protest. By such conditioning of our intellect, Calderón makes us aware of the situation, for in the following scene Crespo is made alcalde of Zalamea (III, 309-348). Given the circumstances and the recent events, Crespo is the last person

to whom judicial office should be given. He has just revealed his intention of taking the law into his own hands by killing the Captain: now the law has been officially presented to him. The audience, therefore, should be very circumspect in its attitude to Crespo's actions, however much sympathy we may feel for him, and we need to examine very carefully the justice Crespo dispenses.

If the normal legal channels were followed, the Captain would probably escape very lightly (he, at any rate, seems happy to think so and v. also Dunn's note to III, 979). When Crespo is made alcalde, the approval of justice is not conferred on his vengeance; it only gives Crespo the chance to disguise it as an act of justice. Crespo fully realises his position, which is reflected in his first duties, of which the Escribano advises him: he has to welcome the King and arrest the Captain's attacker (III, 312-27). For Crespo, that means he has to decide whether to be the master or the servant of the law, and the decision eventually involves his son and his daughter as well as himself and the Captain. He quickly decides to try to play both roles, making his vengeance seem legitimate, and once again language helps confuse the issues. In certain parts of this scene, the words used might make us wary, such as when the Escribano tells Crespo,

> ... tenéis
> para estrena de justicia
> dos grandes acciones hoy (III, 313-5)

- estrena means "a first act of initiation," but it also means "a first gift," and the implications of that, in this context, are obvious. Pedro Crespo accepts the two actions and the two meanings of the estrena. His phrase,

> ¡Cuando vengarme imagina,
> me hace dueño de mi honor
> la vara de la justicia! (III, 328-30)

shows up the conditions to which human justice is exposed: here, it is put in the hands of a man whose state of mind is inappropriate for such a responsibility. The penultimate line of the scene, "ya tenéis el padre alcalde" (III, 347), with its references to God as father and judge,[4] emphasises the contrast between what human law is supposed to reflect (natural and divine law) and what men make it in practice, while the combination of commonplace proverb and profound truth, in the same phrase, is another reminder of the linguistic ambiguity which can obstruct the precision of human law.

In the light of all the above, the irony of the Captain's situation is plain. Having been the main cause of the tension between soldiers and civilians, and of the rupture

[4] v. Dunn, "... Crespo's use of the popular phrase ya tenéis el padre alcalde (III, 347) becomes a sort of pun a lo divino: she has a Father who is also a Judge - and the best Advocate is available (see 1 John ii, 1)," El Alcalde de Zalamea, ed. cit., Introduction, p. 23.

of natural and divine law, he confidently affirms his immunity from "justicia ordinaria:"

> Que la justicia, es forzoso
> remitirme en esta tierra
> a mi consejo de guerra;
> con que, aunque el lance es penoso,
> tengo mi seguridad. (III, 377-81)

His confidence is based on a man-made legal distinction, and human legalities are not reliable. At the same time, it is a sobering comment on human law that the Captain should feel able to depend upon it to avoid being held accountable for breaking moral laws; likewise, that Don Lope should insist on the same point - "¿Vos sabéis que a servir pasa/ al Rey, y soy su juez yo?" (III, 787-8) - and that the King himself should uphold it: "la sentencia/ ... toca a otro tribunal" (III, 897-8).

When Crespo confronts the Captain, there is ambiguity in the presentation of the former's position. First, he uses his position as mayor to arrange the confrontation: then he admits that, in order to pretend that the ensuing interview is on a man-to-man basis, and sets down his staff of office, purportedly as an indication of his good faith:

> Ya que yo, como justicia,
> me valí de su respeto
> para obligaros a oirme,
> la vara a esta parte dejo,
> y como un hombre no más,
> deciros mis penas quiero. Arrima la vara
> (III, 405-10)

But the vara remains there throughout the interview, falsifying

the picture, qualifying Crespo's appeals to natural law and demonstrations of humility, and making the situation more than a matter of "decir penas." Crespo, rather, is playing the part of prosecutor, jury and judge.

What happens in the interview has been analysed extensively by Dunn, and he shows convincingly how Don Álvaro is being offered the means to his own salvation, entailing the acknowledgement of his own humility *via* acceptance of Crespo's offer. I think that Calderón is also setting before us the same phenomenon - man's inability to accept the workings of divine justice, in spite of its necessity - *via* Pedro Crespo. If the Captain's moral duty is to accept Crespo's offer, for the sake of "reconciliation and unity in charity,"[5] then Crespo's moral duty is to accept suffering, forgive them that trespass against him, and love his enemy. Given the way in which Calderón arranges things, it seems possible that we are watching the rejection of divine justice, not just by one party, but by both. The possibility of a divine remedy is offered to both men, and both reject it, leaving us only the unedifying processes of human justice, which is accordingly shown in all its gross inferiority and ultimate inadequacy.

[5]Dunn, *El Alcalde de Zalamea*, ed. cit., Introduction, p. 21, (expounded at greater length in "Patrimonio del Alma").

The scene is not without indications from Calderón that Crespo's behaviour should call our attention to these matters. For one thing, we have already seen Crespo's imitations of Don Lope, the representative of all that he is trying to oppose (I, 850-890), and we even heard him say,

> Yo, señor, siempre respondo
> el el tono y en la letra
> que me hablan, (II, 235-7)

- how far does that apply when he is dealing with the likes of Don Álvaro? In addition, the account of himself that Crespo gives to the Captain bears a strong resemblance to the account that Don Mendo gives us of himself. Don Mendo's claim is that

> no tengo que agradecerle [his father]
> que de hidalgo me engendrase,
> porque yo no me dejara
> engendrar, aunque él porfiase,
> si no fuera de un hidalgo,
> en el vientre de mi madre (I, 269-74)

while Crespo's first disclosure about himself to the Captain betrays an attitude which differs from that of Mendo only in its acknowledgement of the impossibility of the choice (and even that acknowledgement is forced upon Crespo by the simple fact that his father had neither inherited or acquired nobility):

> Yo soy un hombre de bien,
> que a escoger mi nacimiento
> no dejara — es Dios testigo—
> un escrúpulo, un defeto
> en mí, que suplir pudiera
> la ambición de mi deseo. (III, 419-24)

Likewise, Crespo is at pains to assert all the assets he has, which are the same kind of assets (wealth and status) that Don Mendo pretends to have: Crespo tells the Captain,

> Siempre acá entre mis iguales
> me he tratado con respeto;
> de mí hacen estimación
> el cabildo y el Concejo.
> Tengo muy bastante hacienda,
> porque no hay, gracias al cielo,
> otro labrador más rico
> en todos aquestos pueblos
> de la comarca. (III, 425-33)

Outside the context, the remarks of both Mendo and Crespo concerning status conferred by birth may be seen as comments by Calderón on the notion of inherited nobility, the notion which governs the Captain's thought and behaviour. Within the context, Crespo's comments sound strange, coming from a man who has previously affirmed his regard for <u>natural</u> treasures and <u>natural</u> status.

Another curious aspect of Crespo's speech to Don Álvaro, one which throws open to question his commitment to justice and to principle, is his admission that he would not be engaged in trying to come to some arrangement if the affair could be kept quiet:

> Éste [defeto], ya veis si es bien grande,
> pues aunque encubrirle quiero,
> no puedo; que sabe Dios
> que a poder estar secreto
> y sepultado en mí mismo,
> no viniera a lo que vengo;
> que todo esto remitiera,
> por no hablar, al sufrimiento. (III, 463-70)

His primary aim, in effect, seems to be implicit in the words "Restaurad una opinión/ que habéis quitado" (III, 493-4).

The vocabulary of the scene also points to the possibility of a better choice for Crespo. It is noteworthy that the word sufrimiento is uttered three times, twice by Crespo and once by the Captain. Sufrir can mean both "tolerar" and "padecer", according to the Diccionario de Autoridades, and both meanings are involved in the scene. When the Captain talks of sufrimiento ("Ya me falta el sufrimiento,"[III, 518]), he means that he refuses to put up with any more nonsense; when Crespo uses the word ("quédese algo al sufrimiento," "todo esto remitiera,/ por no hablar, al sufrimiento,"[III, 458 and 469-70 respectively]), he is referring to his own pain and suffering. But what Calderón may mean is that the same choice is open to both men, namely, salvation through the acceptance of suffering: for the Captain, the suffering would be in the social and spiritual humiliation he would need to undergo to redeem his crime; for Crespo, the suffering is already a fact - nothing he can do can change it - but he would only accept it "por no hablar," from which we can only infer that his opinión precedes his duty to Christ.

Similarly, when Crespo, at the end of his exhortation, speaks of his humility,

> Un honor
> os pido que me quitasteis vos mesmo;

> y con ser mío, parece,
> (según os le estoy pidiendo
> con humildad) que no os pido
> lo que es mío sino vuestro, (III, 509-14)

a spectator may feel that Crespo is only conscious of humility in human terms; humility in divine terms would surely preclude both Crespo's attitude and the scheme he is hatching.

As Dunn points out, within the action - as distinct from the meaning - of the play, Crespo can be sure that the Captain will not accept his offer, and it would be absurd if the proposed bargain were struck. Indeed, Crespo has his men outside, ready for the Captain's refusal. Divine justice having been rejected by both men, both men are now left only with human law, which exists and operates in default of men's submission to divine law. The Captain relies on human law, because, as we know, it will be lenient with him. Crespo's problem is to bring about a just end (in human terms) by apparently just means. He succeeds in bringing about a just result (the destruction of the cause of the Captain's downfall, his body), and is to be admired for that; however, the dubious quality of the means reveals some shortcomings of human law which the audience does well to ponder.

On the literal level, what we watch in the interview scene is one of the stages in Crespo's plan to break the law whilst pretending to uphold it. The standard of truth and

scruple on which human justice is made to depend is suggested by the type of person to whom Crespo turns for the evidence he needs (Rebolledo and Chispa), and by the methods he uses on them (torture, to avoid which they will say anything he wants them to). The other components of Crespo's justice follow quickly. He imprisons his son, Juan, ostensibly for attacking the Captain, but really in order to protect him and to give an impression of utter impartiality:

> ... a mi padre también
> con tal rigor le tratara.
> (aparte) Aquesto es asegurar
> su vida y han de pensar
> que es la justicia más rara
> del mundo. (III, 678-83)

Crespo will ensure that Juan is acquitted: "(aparte) Yo le hallaré la disculpa" (III, 693). He then makes Isabel file a formal complaint against Don Álvaro, much to her dismay, in order to lend a certain legitimacy to the proceedings. The purposes of these actions are valid, but the attendant means are questionable.

An interesting consequence of all that is the arrival of Don Lope and the ensuing argument he has with Crespo. Having shown us all the half-truths of Crespo's justice, Calderón puts them both face-to-face in defence of their own interests, and thereby draws our attention to an important problem. We are watching a situation in which there are two

alcaldes of Zalamea: both Crespo and Don Lope now hold authority and the power to exercise it with respect to the one crime. Crespo may still retain our sympathy as he spars with Don Lope, so that we are again forced to see how easily we accede to the fallibility of human justice, unless we prefer the formal justice of Don Lope, who is so jealous of the legalities of his jurisdiction that he is more furious at Crespo's transgression of them than he is at Don Álvaro's transgression of natural and moral law. However, it may be doubted whether there is any point in sympathising with the one or the other, for, when we see the two men together, we ought to remember that whereas Don Lope has been most courteous and considerate to Isabel, Crespo has forced her, to her distress, to sign the querella against the Captain; and we may also notice that, whereas Don Lope has treated Juan with the utmost generosity and gallantry (v. II, 612 ff.), Crespo has had Juan arrested, his crime being an attempt to put into practice his father's precepts! Cf.:

> que así obedezco a mi padre
> en dos cosas que me dijo:
> "Reñir con buena ocasión,
> y honrar la mujer," pues miro
> que así honro a la mujer,
> y con buena ocasión riño. (II, 888-93)

It is as difficult to say which of the two men (Don Lope and Crespo) is better at upholding natural law, as it is to say which of them is better at upholding civil law.

In their argument in Act III (783-838), Don Lope and Crespo each try to defend their justice by means of evasions and of propositions that are part true, part false; the only result is an outbreak of violence, the antithesis of justice and order. The violence is halted by the arrival of the King, who has the power and the duty to restore order and dispense justice fittingly, and we might expect him to demonstrate the highest standards of justice: he is, after all, the mejor alcalde, the third alcalde to arrive in Zalamea. However, we have already been given indications that a mere human cannot completely fulfil such responsibilities. For instance, it is the King's advent, and the consequent absence of Don Lope, that gives Don Álvaro the opportunity to abduct Isabel (cf. II, 548-559), and, furthermore, the latter relies on the King for protection ("Con un hombre como yo,/ y en servicio del Rey, no/ se puede hacer," [III, 556-8]; "Al Rey desta sinrazón/ me quejaré" [III, 566-7]). But Crespo, too, counts on the advantage to himself of the King's proximity. Given all these factors, it is almost inevitable that the events which follow the King's arrival are as judicially fallible as the events preceding it.

Crespo's arrangements enable him to trick the King into accepting his actions as legally valid. Again, we are shown half-truths being taken as whole truths, and Crespo's

language requires careful consideration. He tells the King how the Captain was guilty of rape,

> y no quererse casar
> con ella, habiendo su padre
> rogádole con la paz. (III, 872-4)

The spectators know that Crespo did make such a request, but they also know that "con la paz" avoids mention of the threat behind Crespo's offer, both verbal ("Mirad que puedo tomarle/ por mis manos ..." [III, 515-6]) and practical (his men were waiting behind the door). Don Lope's insinuation of favouritism ("Este es el alcalde, y es/ su padre," [III, 875-6]) gives Crespo the chance to mention his prudent imprisonment of Juan ("... como he preso/ un hijo mío, es verdad/ que no escuchara a mi hija" [III, 884-6]), which, we already know, was calculated to have precisely the effect it now exerts. Crespo goes on to defy anyone to say "que yo haya hecho/en ella [la causa] alguna maldad" (III, 889-90) - but he is the only one who knows what has been happening; he invites his listeners to ascertain "si he inducido algún testigo" (III, 891) (but we saw him coerce Rebolledo and Chispa into giving evidence), or "si está algo escrito demás/ de lo que he dicho" (III, 892-3) (but he dictated or wrote everything that has been testified).

The King accepts all that at its face value ("Bien está/ sustanciado," [III, 894-5]), and the way is thus prepared

for the King's acceptance of the fait accompli of the Captain's execution. All Crespo has to do is play on the meaning of the King's own words ("Vos habéis dicho que está/ bien dada aquesta sentencia;" [III, 912-3], and v. Dunn's note), and adduce a convenient general truth to justify a particular course of action:

> Toda la justicia vuestra
> es sólo un cuerpo, no más:
> si éste tiene muchas manos,
> decid ¿qué mas se me da
> matar con aquésta un hombre,
> que estotra había de matar? (III, 917-22)

That statement is merely a form of words, and the King, had he cared to probe further into the particular situation, might have considered it an unsatisfactory explanation; but instead, the King accedes to the general truth, and deems further enquiry unnecessary. Crespo's rhetoric wins the day. The appearance is that harmony is restored, but beneath the apparent harmony, the fragility of our social constructs is revealed.

So Crespo wins his case, and justice, of a sort, is done. The spectator may feel that the ends of human justice have been served, but he must surely also feel that the means of human justice have been shown in a perspective that is unsatisfying. Part of the unsatisfactory aspect of human justice is only caused by Calderón's manipulation of the plot, of course (he could equally well have written a play showing

human justice to be flawless), but we cannot deny all the imperfections in such a way. We know that, if Crespo had not carried out his schemes, the Captain would have received lenient treatment from a military court (partly through the pressures of circumstance, which we have already seen in action), and that, in real life, such an arrangement, such a mockery of justice, would not be unlikely. We must therefore wonder if the compromises Crespo makes with morality and legality are not essential components of human justice. We must also be aware that, outside as well as inside a dramatic fiction, the force of circumstance has much to do with the operation of human justice: the King cannot be everywhere at once - on how many occasions does his failure to intervene at the appropriate time lead to a miscarriage of justice?

The way in which justice is subject to the pattern of events become quite marked towards the end of the play. When Don Lope arrives, soon after Crespo has completed his preparations, he points out that, were it not for his gammy leg, he would have arrived earlier and freed the Captain:

> Que un alcaldillo de aquí
> al capitán tiene preso.
> Y ¡voto a Dios! no he sentido
> en toda aquesta jornada
> esta pierna excomulgada,
> si no es hoy, que me ha impedido
> el no haber antes llegado
> donde el castigo le dé. (III, 742-7)

- what would have happened then? Again, when the King arrives, just in time to prevent a fracas, his handling of the situation disappoints whatever expectations we may have had of seeing justice dispensed in a satisfactory manner; he is anxious to get it all out of the way, and expediency triumphs, because "me importa/ llegar presto a Portugal" (III, 943-4). That all this cannot be explained away by way of organisational demands (on Calderón) may be inferred from Don Lope's remark to Crespo "Agradeced al buen tiempo/ que llegó su Majestad" (III, 949-50), which actually draws attention to the problem of what would have happened if the King had not arrived at that juncture. It seems that the circumstances which affect human justice may be as trivial as arrival and departure times. More importantly, the King's urgency may invite us to consider the fact that the processes of human justice are, of necessity, subject to temporal limitations: rarely, if ever, does a court have time to investigate all the circumstances of a case, or of an individual involved in a case. To say that legal processes can ascertain only part of the truth (unless unlimited time can be devoted to a case) is to say that justice is only partly done, which, in turn, is to say that "justice" must be partly injustice, if the machinery of "justice" is to continue to function.

Equally important is Calderón's suggestion of the extent to which principles of justice can be befogged by words.

At one extreme, there is Crespo, adept at the inappropriate application of a general truth to a particular situation ("Toda la justicia vuestra/ es un cuerpo, no más"); at the other extreme there is Don Lope, who is sometimes careful not to make unqualified statements ("si es necesario ..."), but whose attitude to the case is conditioned by the importance he attaches to jurisdición. Which attitude contains the greater validity? The King is convinced by Crespo, to the extent of making him alcalde for life. But the spectator is left only with the impression of the imprecision and ambiguity of words, which is the last thing Calderón leaves in our minds, ending the play with the punning, by Chispa, on cantar, to which Crespo, as I remarked earlier, even draws our attention ("Con que fin el autor da ..." [III, 978], my underlining). Rebolledo and Chispa may not be the characters to whom we would look for a final impression of the play, but the play began with their puns and word-plays, and, now that it has come full circle, we can see what the implications were of that aspect of human language.

Now to the problem of liberty. I repeat, that it should be realised that all my remarks concerning justice in the play are not irrelevant or gratuitous, but an integral part of the problem of liberty; indeed, the two problems are, in practice, enmeshed with each other. If liberty derives

from obedience to law, and law can be as fallible as is suggested, complications arise when we try to put our theories of liberty into practice. It is all very well to accept that liberty is a personal responsibility, but our attainment of the proper use of our natural liberty is made enormously difficult by our propensity for pursuing false liberties, believing them to be true liberty; we are, then, easily deceived, and we need the guidance and the protection of law and justice. How well that works in practice may be seen in the dramatic context of El Alcalde de Zalamea, where we see various aspects of the problem: some men pursue false liberties, others attempt to employ their natural liberty as is proper but are confused by the shortcomings of human law, and there is even an example of natural liberty being used fully.

Don Álvaro represents the embodiment of the kind of excess which is seen to be latent in every form of freedom from restraint: his "liberty" is the false liberty of rejection of moral law and the failure of reason to restrain the passions. In the individual microcosm as well as in the corporate macrocosm, the relationships between justice and liberty apply, and the Captain offers a clear example of their distortion. The chaos caused by him is caused by injustice in his own personality, by disorder in his will; justice within a man is the surest guide (because justice is inseparable from reason) to

natural liberty, and inner injustice brings about a condition of moral slavery in the individual. Moral slavery involves the submission to instinct, the reduction to the level of beasts, that is, the denial of the faculty of choice. Examples of that process are not hard to find in the text.

The Captain's injustice and lawlessness are made explicit in his declamations of desire at the beginning of Act II (41-134), and, once again, Dunn provides a clear explanation of the implications of his words.[6] Briefly, the Captain calls on natural phenomena to justify his lust, but his examples are of rapid change and violent disorder inimical to love.

An important point Dunn makes in his note is that "while the Captain flatters himself with talk about the power of his love, his words point in a different direction." The Captain sees nothing wrong with his behaviour because he can find the right form of words to coat it with a romantic veneer: he convinces himself by his own rhetoric. The similarities with the Comendador of Fuenteovejuna are obvious, and similar observations concerning liberty may be made. Like the Comendador's, the Captain's language confuses his reason, exacerbating the disorder already existing in his will, and compounding

[6] El Alcalde de Zalamea, note on vv. 75-100 and 105-16, v. also Introduction, section 6.

the destruction of choice which his inner lawlessness has already caused.

There is a hint of the Captain's confusion of words early in the play, when he offers a little theorem to his Sergeant:

> El que una belleza adora,
> dijo, viendo a la que amó:
> "aquélla es mi dama," y no:
> "aquélla es mi labradora."
> Luego, si dama se llama
> la que se ama, claro es ya
> que en una villana está
> vendido el nombre de dama. (I, 205-13)

The Captain, apparently, attaches much importance to words, but the emptiness, and, worse, the pernicious effect, of his attitude is shown by his instant volte-face when he has seen Isabel for the first time:

> Quien nació
> con obligaciones, debe
> acudir a ellas, y yo
> al respeto desta dama
> suspendí todo el furor. (I, 728-32)

There, the notion of dama is invoked because it conveniently fits the situation, that is, it provides the Captain with an excuse with which to answer Crespo's query as to why he is complimenting Isabel instead of slaughtering Rebolledo. Crespo, of course, is not fooled for a moment (although Juan thinks he is!), and his reply reveals the transparency of Don Álvaro's rhetoric ("... es labradora, señor,/ que no dama" [I, 733-5]).

The situation is reminiscent of Fuenteovejuna, Act I, where Laurencia asks Frondoso, "Damas ... nos llamas?" (v. 291), and there ensues a discussion showing the distorting effect of words.

The connection between law, language, reason and liberty is visible in the Captain's first remarks to Isabel:

> Pero mirad que no es bien
> en tan precisa ocasión
> hacer vos el homicidio
> que no queréis que haga yo. (I, 703-6)

It is an absurd hyperbole, by which the Captain seeks to make an association of the pretended punishment of Rebolledo with the effect Isabel has on him. To connect two such disparate entities in one word is an outrageous distortion, even if it is standard courtly love talk: the Captain glibly employs the metaphor on the assumption that Isabel will feel beholden to him - homicidio is a legalistic term, and the Captain is trying to impute to Isabel a "crime". Isabel realises what is going on and refuses the bait:

> Que dejéis este soldado
> os suplico; pero no
> que cobréis de mí la deuda
> a que agradecida estoy. (I, 711-14)

The Captain then changes his tack, but implicit in his play on homicidio is a contempt for law, as something to be manipulated at his own convenience, and a confusion of reason, both of which conspire to negate liberty. The contempt for law in

this case is on a metaphorical plane, but it becomes a reality when, with his abduction of Isabel, the Captain demonstrates his scorn for natural law and divine law; finally, he spurns human law, by mocking Crespo's position as *alcalde* and maintaining his immunity from any law except the slack law of a military court, which to him is only a "lance penoso" (III, 380). Crespo mocks the presumption of the Captain ("— Con respeto le llevad ... [etc.]" [III, 575-86]), and the Captain's complete denial of his natural liberty is reflected in the deprivation of his physical liberty. The metaphor of Isabel's "crime" also becomes a reality, and the Captain is surprised.

An uncomfortable aspect of the Captain's condition is that if, after the commission of his crime, human laws were obeyed by everyone, as natural liberty requires, the Captain would get what he expects: trial by a military court. On that issue at least, the inadequacy of human law as a guardian of natural liberty could hardly be shown more clearly: far from suggesting the right choice to the Captain, it merely encourages his license.

In turn, the Captain's denial of his own liberty helps to remove the possibility of liberty from his subordinates. The Sergeant, Rebolledo and the others have to *obey* the Captain, who is, effectively, their law. Not surprisingly, disorder and individual injustice is rife amongst the lower

ranks, and obedience to the Captain does nothing to assist their liberty. In practice, it is not really very sensible to say that the Captain is "their law", because he imposes no law at all; if anything, he is dependent on them. The Sergeant lets him know about the girls, Rebolledo is the accomplice who facilitates his entry to Isabel's room, Rebolledo also suggests the "jira y fiesta" (II, 140) to attract Isabel's attention, which he and Chispa then organise, and all three - Rebolledo, Chispa and the Sergeant - help the Captain to abduct Isabel. There is no law at all amongst these types - not even "honour among thieves," since Rebolledo (twice) and Chispa are quick to spill the beans when trouble arises - but only the anarchy which is destructive of liberty.

Needless to say, the perversion of Rebolledo's liberty is not caused only by the Captain's injustice. Rebolledo is shown as a lawless character in the opening scenes: he wants to desert, and says it would not be the first time ("no ... será el primer tornillazo/ que habré yo dado en mi vida" [I, 43-44]). Theoretically, Rebolledo's service in the army ought to offer a form of liberty, in that it consists of obedience to an authority fighting (purportedly) for the glory of God and King; that is not what happens, because, as we see, officers of the calibre of the Captain make nonsense of such liberty. However, the supreme commander, Don Lope, is

not corrupt, and obedience to his orders might do more for Rebolledo's liberty; but that does not impress Rebolledo, whose real problem is just lazy truculence and indiscipline. Rebolledo, like the Captain, therefore, is a disordered person whose natural liberty is nullified by that disorder - his actions are as often motivated by the instinct of fear as the Captain's are by the instinct of lust.

Rebolledo's denial of natural liberty may be seen particularly clearly in Act II, when Crespo's dinner with Don Lope is interrupted by the soldiers' carousing, and fighting breaks out (183-502). The supper scene begins with Crespo's description of Isabel's garden, in which the harmony of nature is explicitly stated (193-208 - I shall examine this speech in greater detail below). Isabel herself is the character who tries hardest to use her natural liberty, and Crespo, in her garden, affirms his own desire to live according to the natural precepts he sees represented there. Such a desire is a fundamental part of natural liberty, in that it characterises the voluntary submission to, or choice of, that which is in accord with one's own nature. But the music of nature which Crespo describes is soon disrupted, and it is disrupted by the intrusive, provocative and evilly-motivated music of Rebolledo and Chispa, with all the denial and perversion of liberty that their music implies. When, at the end of

the play, Rebolledo says he will never sing again, it is in no way a step toward liberty, but only a reflection of his fear of imprisonment and torture.

The type of behaviour to be seen in both Rebolledo and the Captain, and especially in the Captain, is an extreme form of the kind of injustice and license of which most men are capable, if not guilty (though not necessarily to the degree visible in the Captain). Another example in the play is Don Mendo, who behaves exactly as the Captain does - but only in his imagination. Like Don Álvaro, Don Mendo plays silly games with language, his greater absurdity consisting in the fact that the only reason his language does not condition his behaviour (as Don Álvaro's does) is that he is too weak to <u>have</u> any behaviour. Nuño turns his every remark to a joke about food, which is to say that Nuño keeps puncturing his dream-world with reminders of reality; but Don Mendo refuses to acknowledge that which reason would dictate, and his natural liberty is doubly false, since, not only does he pervert it by indulging in his sensual imaginings, he also has no potential even of acting on his <u>irrational</u> choices. His only liberties are his "exención de mi linaje" (I, 264), i.e., the dubious liberties of his bought nobility (dubious because they are <u>exemptions</u> from law - e.g., he does not have to house soldiers), and the false liberties of his impertinent language

to Isabel - "extremos" (I, 378), as she rightly calls them. Don Mendo's inability to use his natural liberty is thus, effectively, implicit in Dunn's description of him as "the mere plaything of his fantasies, divorced from all realities".[7]

Set against the perverted liberty of the above characters may be seen the proper natural liberty of Isabel (not least, because she is persecuted by all of them), who is the one character in the play whom we may regard as fulfilling all the requirements of natural liberty, to the extent that she comes remarkably close to moral liberty. Before examining her situation, though, it would be useful to examine that of the two main protagonists, Don Lope and Crespo.

For Don Lope, natural liberty would seem to be a reality, as he is a man who wants to obey both natural law and human law. His predicament is summed up in the fact that he eventually finds himself in the irrational position of having to defend the Captain's rights (and of being found by the King at the beginning of the consequent brawl). The reason for his finding himself in such a paradoxical situation is not hard to discern. Human law is inferior in status to natural law, and is supposed to be made, by men, to

[7] "Patrimonio del Alma," p. 82

harmonise with natural and divine law; but, as we have seen, that harmony may break down, and a conflict between natural law and human law may arise. Don Lope, when faced with such a conflict, throws his weight behind human law, and the chaotic consequences of lending human law priority over natural law are clearly visible in the play. To a certain extent, such an inversion is a reflection on Don Lope, but, to a far greater extent, it is also a reflection on the human law on which liberty may depend.

The implications of that become more serious when we consider that Don Lope is the King's representative, and that, indeed, the King would have preferred to uphold Don Lope's view of the juridical situation. His failure to enforce it is due, as we have seen, to his own commitments and to Crespo's being one step ahead of him. If that is the state of the law of the land, then the theoretical arguments proposing obedience to human law as a guide to natural liberty begin to look as if they can become inoperative in practice.

From there, we arrive at the situation of Crespo, who wants to live by the precepts of natural law, but who is later forced to take account of the vagaries of human law - an attitude which is the reverse of Don Lope's.

At the beginning, Crespo is a man for whom natural

liberty seems to mean something, as we gather from his first words:

> que esta tarde
> salí a mirar la labranza,
> y están las parvas notables
> de manojos y montones,
> que parecen, al mirarse
> desde lejos, montes de oro,
> y aun oro de más quilates,
> pues de los granos de aquéste
> es todo el cielo el contraste. (I, 424-32)

Coming directly after the departure of Don Mendo, the language points to the comparison to be made between Mendo's "ejecutoria tan grande/ pintada de oro y azul" (I, 262-3), and Crespo's natural ejecutoria of golden grain set against a blue sky. Whereas the former represents a false liberty, Crespo's words manifest the true natural liberty known to a man who "sees that the bounds of nature are set by law and approved by reason."[8] Crespo does not even want an ejecutoria, as the scene goes on to show, emphasising the truly free aspect of Crespo's choice, in that his predilection for natural goods is totally unforced, entirely voluntary.

The same comments may be made about Crespo's speech (previously referred to, above) in Isabel's garden:

> Un pedazo es de jardín,
> do mi hija se divierta.
> Sentaos; que el viento suave
> que en las blandas hojas suena
> destas parras y estas copas,

[8] Dunn, "Patrimonio del Alma," p. 82.

mil cláusulas lisonjeras
hace al compás desta fuente,
cítara de plata y perlas,
porque son, en trastes de oro,
las guijas templadas cuerdas.
Perdonad si de instrumentos
solos la música suena,
sin cantores que os deleiten,
sin voces que os entretengan;
que como músicos son
los pájaros que gorjean,
no quieren cantar de noche,
ni yo puedo hacerles fuerza. (II, 191-203)

The image is of the wind playing in the leaves of the trees and vines, playing melodies to the rhythm of the stream, a zither of silver and pearls whose strings are pebbles, tuned in frets of gold: the music is instrumental, rather than vocal, because the singers, the birds, are asleep. The musical harmony of nature is established, and Crespo's acceptance of its rules (cf. "ni yo puedo hacerles fuerza"), and evident delight in its order and tranquility, demonstrate again the attitude of a man voluntarily submitting himself to the laws of the natural good, that is, the attitude of a man who is naturally free.

An important point about both of the above passages of imagery is that they demonstrate the positive possibilities of words. Just as words can confuse the reason (as in the case of Don Álvaro) and help to blind men to the evil aspects of their behaviour, so can they suggest to the reason the kind of truth to which reason should aspire, and even the kind of truth

which the reason cannot properly grasp, as is evident in the work of such poets as San Juan and Fray Luis. There is a striking similarity between the tone of Crespo's words and that of, for instance, Fray Luis' "La Vida Retirada," a poem offering a complete statement of the nature of liberty, in which "each verse within itself reflects the choice and the consequences of choice which is at the centre of the whole poem."[9] Calderón, by inventing a dramatic situation in which language that points to liberty is surrounded, and eventually overcome, by language that betrays liberty, is able to suggest the rarity of that liberty amongst ordinary men.

The above aspects of the scene in the garden are thrown into relief by the contrasting attitude displayed by Don Lope, who, although charmed by the milieu ("Apacible/ estancia en extremo es ésta." [II, 189-90]), is incapable of accepting Crespo's invitation to enjoy it ("No podré; que es imposible/ que divertimiento tenga." [II, 211-2]). The pain of his leg, itself caused by the deliberate senselessness of human warfare, interferes with his potential for employing his natural liberty, just as it does in another way, viz., driving him to enforce human law, even if at the expense of natural law, because his short temper precludes his contemplation of

[9] L. J. Woodward, "'La Vida Retirada' of Fray Luis de León," Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, XXXI, 1954, p. 19.

possible complexities. Human law must, of necessity, restrict the import of its words, so that the "official" language of Don Lope becomes the antithesis of the natural imagery of Crespo, who, later, demonstrates the inadequacy of law's language by turning it to his own account. The rift between the two laws and the two languages is clear as the garden-scene progresses: Crespo, apparently irritated by Don Lope's rejection of the soothing qualities of the garden, begins to mock him.

But Crespo's music is soon drowned by the cacophony of the soldiers; his breeze is lost in the turbión he had earlier feared. From that moment, his natural liberty becomes obscured by his desire to make human law effective, as the imperfections of human law and custom law render it necessary for him to act in some ways contrary to natural law even in the defence of it. Thus, he defies custom law by not killing Isabel, and by preventing Juan from doing so (such an act would be a hideous perversion of natural law), but does inflict on her, as mentioned above, an action nearly as abhorrent to her, the revelation of the crime ("Pues no consigues vengarla,/ consigue el callarla ahora" [III, 705-6]). In the same scene, he protects the life of Juan, but only by having him arrested, to Juan's utter amazement:

> Nadie entender solicita
> tu fin pues, sin honra ya,
> prendes a quien te la da,
> guardando a quien te la quita. (III, 695-8)

At the end, he is without both his children, Isabel having gone to a convent and Juan to the army, and we are not given any indication of how much they would have divined of Crespo's motives. However, Crespo's motives are no less difficult for the omniscient spectator to see: on the one hand, Crespo wants to protect his children, but, on the other, his handling of them is part of his larger scheme of vengeance.

Crespo, then, far from asserting his liberty, actually loses it by submitting himself to the compromises of human law, and the first section of this chapter, examining the limitations of human justice, suggests why that is inevitable. Not the least of the factors involved is the confusing effect of words, and the process of Crespo's turning away from complete submission to natural law is reflected in the language of the play, as Crespo eschews further reference to the kind of poetic imagery mentioned, and indulges in the word-play of human law; there is no imagery from Crespo in the whole of Act III, even in his offer to the Captain. Language, which for Crespo once led him to truth, becomes just a means for him to deceive the King.

Of course, there would be nothing to stop Crespo's regaining his natural liberty after the closing of the case,

but, at the end, he is made alcalde for life by the King, and as long as he has to administer human justice he will find it difficult to combine it with the kind of natural liberty he enjoyed prior to the coming of the army. It is, furthermore, salutory to note that, while few men would prove better alcaldes than Crespo, the natural liberty of everyone in Zalamea now depends, to an extent, on him; we have seen his manipulation of human law, but he remains the best guardian of the villagers' liberty that human law can offer. We may, perhaps, sense a further irony in Crespo's final words to the King, on receiving his accolade: "Sólo vos a la justicia/ tanto supierais honrar." (III, 947-8).

As regards natural liberty, therefore, the words "el honor es patrimonio del alma," seen in the light of Dunn's explanation of the phrase, contain a commensurately profound truth: in an imperfect world, liberty must, ultimately, involve distinctions between obedience to natural (and divine) law, and obedience to human law. For all men, the difficulty is that obedience to natural and divine law brings suffering.

Isabel, to whom we can now return, is the obvious example of the association of natural liberty with suffering. She is, from all we see of her, as innocent and virtuous as we may expect a human to be. Her discretion and obedience proclaim her natural liberty as clearly as Crespo's love of

nature's harmony proclaims his. The false liberty of Don Mendo, the license of the Captain, the indiscipline of the soldiers are all anathema to her; as Dunn points out, she is as anxious as Crespo to avoid the soldiers:

> Sé que el estarme
> aquí es estar solamente
> a escuchar mil necedades. (III, 542-4)

In her voluntary choice of that which is discernible as good, she approaches the moral liberty implicit in the lines "Está/ el mérito en la obediencia" (II, 317-8). That obedience, to her father and his guest, is constantly in evidence, and, presumably, may be seen as a reflection of her father's education and example. Yet, she suffers, just as her father suffers; the difference between them is that Isabel is prepared to accept it.

However, if her impeccable comportment is the result of Crespo's training and example, then so, too, must be her attitudes and expectations after the rape. When we watch Isabel untying Crespo, in the full expectation of being killed by him, we are witnessing the impact that Crespo's teaching of custom law has made on her; the point is reinforced by Juan's adherence to the same custom, which he tries to put into effect both in the forest and back in the village, and by Isabel's anticipation of her brother's action. Juan, we may remember, goes into action repeating Crespo's words.

Crespo must have taught his children these precepts of wiping out stains by bloodshed, but now he is having to juggle natural law, human law and custom law. Not surprisingly, his defiance of custom law confuses his children completely. They try to obey the laws he has taught them, which ought to mean that they are employing their natural liberty; but the result is confusion, not only because their father suddenly rejects custom law, but also because the whole idea of killing an innocent girl, and the girl's acceptance of it, must be considered a perversion of natural liberty. Here, once again, we are watching the practical impossibilities of trying to assert liberty through laws made by men.

But the bigger threat to Isabel's liberty comes, of course, from the Captain and those around him - not because liberty implies freedom from such importunities, but because their passions cause correspondingly powerful passions of the soul in Isabel - fear, shame, sorrow - effecting a distortion of her reason. These passions in Isabel, mooted in Act I when Crespo finds the Captain "requebrando una mujer," eliciting Isabel's "¡Valgame Dios!" (I, 724-5), and in Isabel's anguish in the garden in Act II ("¿Qué culpa tengo yo, cielos,/ para estar a esto sujeta?" [II, 357-8]), finally overwhelm her at the beginning of Act III. She wanders bemusedly through

the forest, symbolic of confusion and indecision,[10] praying for the night to never end, for the sun to never rise; she expresses, thus, not the liberty of harmony with nature which she would experience in her garden, but the non-liberty of wanting to see nature perverted, its rules reversed. Addressing Crespo, she reminds us, in "¿cuándo de la tiranía/ no son sagrados los montes?" (III, 136-7), that, as Dunn points out, "the earliest wrong took place sheltered by the trees of Eden"[11] - as we know, the Fall, among other things, involved man's betrayal of his moral and his natural liberty. This destruction of Isabel's liberty is one of the facets of the essential unity of human society to which Dunn draws attention - "what hurts one hurts all."[12]

Eventually, Isabel enters a convent, ostensibly an act of natural liberty which offers every possibility of attaining moral liberty; but we may wonder how much such liberty (of either kind) is qualified by the duress under which she enters the convent. Juan, meanwhile, who never did, apparently, share Crespo's genuine love of natural goods, but tried to follow his precepts nevertheless, goes to join

[10] v. Dunn, El Alcalde de Zalamea, ed. cit., pp. 8-9, and note to II, 874-93.

[11] ibid., note to verses quoted.

[12] ibid., Introduction, p. 21.

the army. His admiration of Don Lope means that he will no doubt obey human law to the very best of his ability, but whether that will assist his natural liberty may be judged from what we have seen of Don Lope's justice.

El Alcalde de Zalamea, because it is deeply involved with problems of law, shows us some of the problems of liberty. We are offered stark contrasts between the quality of the liberty of adherence to natural law and that of the liberty of obedience to human law, and we can see how conflicts between natural law and human law can arise and can jeopardise liberty. Because of the imperfections of human law, we can see how difficult it is to be free via obedience thereto, even though we are told that it is theoretically possible. We can also see how the human reason (of which human law is but a manifestation), on which natural liberty depends, is susceptible to distortion not only by passions but also by words, not least because of the inherent ambiguity and imprecision of language itself. These problems are shown more explicitly - and more crucially - in La Vida es Sueño.

Chapter IV

Calderón's LA VIDA ES SUEÑO

The problem of liberty and free will in La Vida es Sueño has been examined before,[1] but not, to my knowledge, in a way which takes full account of the premises outlined in Part I, above. Perhaps that is because Segismundo has traditionally been regarded as a developing hero, who, in the words of P. N. Dunn, "attains to prudence and a kind of liberty which is more satisfying than that which he yearns for in the famous soliloquy."[2] However, as recent work has suggested, it is possible to look askance at the quality of Segismundo's judgements and actions in the last act, and particularly the last scene, of the play,[3] and it therefore seems legitimate

[1] By, for example, Tomás Carreras y Artau, "La filosofía de la libertad en La Vida es Sueño," in Estudios Eruditos In Memoriam de Adolfo Bonilla y San Martín, Vol. 1, (Madrid, 1927), pp. 151-179, an article which is hopelessly confused from basic premises and definitions onwards.

[2] "The horoscope motif in La Vida es Sueño," Atlante, I, 1953, pp. 187-201; v.p. 196.

[3] V. e.g., H. B. Hall, "Segismundo and the rebel soldier," Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, XLV, 1968, pp. 189-200, and T. E. May, "Segismundo y el soldado rebelde," in Hacia Calderón. Coloquio Anglogermano. Exeter 1969, (Berlin, 1970), pp. 71-75. It should be said that these two articles differ considerably from each other in both approach and conclusions.

to examine afresh the problem of liberty as it appears in the play, having regard to the reservations lately expressed about Segismundo. That is not to suggest that the Parker-Wilson-Dunn approach, which has raised discussion of the play to a sensible level, should be discarded to make way for the more sceptical view represented by H. B. Hall: to the contrary, I think that both views can and should be seen in conjunction, as I hope to be able to demonstrate later in this chapter.

To begin with, I propose to examine precisely the extent of Segismundo's possession of, and deprivation of, liberty, the premises for which are set out in the first monologue, vv. 102-172.[4] Concerning the development of Segismundo's reasoning powers, we may begin to suspect their severe limitations when we hear Segismundo's opening words, which toy with the contention that Segismundo is in prison because "el delito mayor/ del hombre es haber nacido" (111-2). Segismundo is addressing the cielos, and we know that, in heaven's book, being born can only be a delito in one sense, that is, that man is born guilty of original sin. If that is what Segismundo means, we should expect, at least from a rational or minimally-educated person, some mention of Grace and redemption; but Segismundo is saying that "haber nacido" is a crime

[4] La Vida es Sueño, ed. by Albert E. Sloman, (Manchester University Press, 1965). All quotations are taken from this edition.

for which he is kept in prison, and we know that "vuestra justicia" in this sense has no basis in divine and natural law - other men, equally guilty of being born, do not spend their whole lives in gaol (save in the Platonic sense of the prison of the body).[5] It does not make much sense as Segismundo expresses it, and, although he is clearly not devoid of the faculty of reason, since he is capable of razón and discurso and of asking the obvious question, "Pues si los demás nacieron,/ ¿qué privilegios tuvieron/ que yo no gocé jamás?" (120-2), we may nevertheless conclude that his ability to apply his reason is, or has been restricted. Later, we find that Segismundo is there by order of Basilio, and that everything Segismundo knows has been taught him by Basilio's hatchet-man, Clotaldo, the only other human being Segismundo has ever seen:

> ... nunca vi ni hablé
> sino a un hombre solamente
> que aquí mis desdichas siente,
> por quien las noticias sé
> de cielo y tierra. (203-7)

So Clotaldo, as Segismundo's teacher, has obviously been unable to give Segismundo any satisfactory answer (not that there

[5] A note by F. Sánchez y Escribano, "Sobre el origen de 'El delito mayor del hombre es haber nacido'", Romance Notes, III, 1962, pp. 50-51, suggests that this is something of a commonplace, a deliberately paradoxical cry of "desesperación barroca" in the face of humanity's inadequacy. In the play, that makes more sense when we learn about Segismundo's tutor, a purveyor of commonplaces.

could ever be one) to the only question which can really mean anything to him. Segismundo's knowledge and understanding, and hence his capacity to use and develop his reason, have apparently been severely crippled, and deliberately so, by the machinations of those responsible for his plight. It is therefore not surprising that the rest of his monologue should consist of a series of truths and falsehoods which do not really help Segismundo to understand his situation, but rather are an indication of the glaring deficiencies in his education. The fact that he does possess the faculty of reason, which manifests itself from time to time, becomes important in Acts II and III.

The content of the monologue is a comparison of Segismundo's liberty with the liberty he sees in the natural phenomena around him; but there is an essential equivocation in this comparison, for human liberty is not of the same species as the liberty of the natural phenomena, and in that sense it is not very useful to ask whether the one has more of one thing than the other has of another. Clearly, there <u>is</u> a sense in which Segismuno's liberty is less than that of the bird, brute, fish and brook, namely, that they have more freedom of movement; but even this freedom of movement is severely circumscribed by the fact that, whatever these natural phenomena do, they do not do from choice, but from

an inescapable force of law, the law of their species (i.e., their instinct). The inherent ambivalence of the comparison is emphasised by Segismundo's terms of reference: he feels deprived because he has the attributes of "más alma", "mejor distinto [instinto]", "más albedrío" and "más vida"; but those attributes bestow on Segismundo more natural liberty than the natural phenomena possess: their freedom of movement is only a function of their instinct, and, as such, vastly inferior to human liberty. Segismundo's possession of an immortal soul means that he is not chained to any particular good on earth; he has "mejor instinto" because, whereas beasts have only instinct, Segismundo has, even if not given the opportunity to develop it, the faculty of reason and thus the power to choose, which comprises his albedrío; finally, he has "más vida", the union of soul and body which combines the previous attributes.

In a simple sense, the sense implied by the progression of Segismundo's comparisons - from the bird, which can move in air, water and on land, to the beasts which must remain on land or in water, to the fish, confined to the water, to the brook which may only move in one dimension and in one direction - that is, the freedom of movement, Segismundo has less liberty than the phenomena he observes; but, in a far more significant sense, he has a greater liberty than they do, in that

he has freedom of choice.[6] Obviously, that is not to imply that, because Segismundo is wrong, he has nothing to complain about: we know that the tragedy he endures is of having less liberty than other men. However, whereas that deprivation is one of freedom of action, the onlookers should be aware of something else, namely, that Segismundo, by virtue of being a man, does possess, apparently without realising it, natural liberty. We know that this natural liberty is a freedom which, in practice, has to be exercised with great caution, in that it demands the application of reason to judgement about what is to be done (prudence) and may very easily be abused and perverted by a confusion of the reason, leading to misjudgement and wrong choice; we also know that it can be denied by a subservience to the instincts, a point which assumes considerable importance in the closing scenes of the play. If the proper exercise of natural liberty involves reason refined by knowledge and experience, three aspects of the foregoing should be noted: one is that Segismundo is apparently unaware of the liberty he possesses by virtue of being a man, and is therefore unaware

[6] L. E. Palacios makes this point, in "La Vida es Sueño", Finisterre, II, 1948, pp. 5-52, but without stating the point conveyed to the spectators by Segismundo's ignorance of the superior value of natural liberty (p. 15). Palacios affirms that "Segismundo no duda un momento de la existencia de su libre albedrío", but it is significant that Segismundo asks "Y yo con más albedrío,/ ¿tengo menos libertad?" (151-2), and then passes over the subject.

of its ramifications; the second is that, even if he were aware, he has not had a single opportunity to exercise this liberty and thus gain the experience and discrimination necessary to preserve it (a few moments later he is presented with his first such opportunity and makes a complete mess of it); and the third is that, if the confusion and uncertainty of this speech is at all representative of Segismundo's mental processes (which, as we are to discover, it is), then his education and the development of his reason leave much to be desired - nature is supposed to offer lessons to men, but Segismundo does not appear to have been told what they are.

Human liberty, concerned - in practice - with obedience to just law, or voluntary submission to reason, is a kind of liberty which diametrically opposes the involuntary submission to instinct of the beasts. Segismundo is subservient to a law, but - and this is where another facet of the deprivation of his liberty is shortly to be seen - to a law which is not based on right reason, a law which is a perversion perpetrated by Basilio in the name of raison d'état (sic - but more of that in due course). Basilio is responsible for the destruction of natural liberty in himself (because he is motivated by fear), in Segismundo, and, by extension, in all his subjects (because they are all affected by the laws he promulgates). To a dispassionate observer,

Basilio's decisions regarding Segismundo cannot seem anything other than a transgression of divine law, natural law and human just law. Segismundo's loss of liberty is thus compounded by his subjection to this unjust law of Basilio, because it means that he has no practical guidance, no criteria by which to measure his actions and employ his natural liberty; he is obviously not likely, as his contempt for authority and convention demonstrates, to be persuaded to respect and acknowledge law of any kind, since the only law he knows virtually denied him his humanity. For a knowledgeable and virtuous man, the imposition of unjust law might not prove the destruction of liberty, but Basilio has denied Segismundo the opportunity to become knowledgeable or virtuous by denying him the opportunity to develop his reason and experience. Segismundo's predicament, in sum, is not that he has less liberty than the beasts, but that he has less than other men, not because he has been denied freedom of movement, but because he has been denied the reason, guidance and experience <u>via</u> which other men may use and develop their natural liberty; inevitably, this lawless disregard for Segismundo's natural liberty makes of him an animal, that is, a creature governed by his instincts.

The most significant of the string of questions that Segismundo puts despairingly to the universe is thus the last one:

> ¿Qué ley, justicia o razón
> negar a los hombres sabe
> privilegio tan suave ...? (167-9)

We are soon to find that no "ley, justicia o razón" is responsible for Segismundo's condition, which is the result of the above-mentioned denial and transgression of every kind of law, justice and reason by one man, Basilio.

For the spectator, such an analysis as this may not be possible as he watches - although it must surely have been clear enough to any seventeenth-century Spaniard who knew his basic dogma - but we can scarcely fail to notice the way in which Calderón proceeds to demonstrate dramatically the practical consequences of Segismundo's condition. Immediately following the monologue, Segismundo, for the first time in his life, encounters a human being who is not Clotaldo, and he has a limited opportunity for action of some kind. This action is, as we might expect, quite irrational: for no other reason than that

> ... no sepas que sé
> que sabes flaquezas mías,
> sólo porque me has oído, (181-3)

he tries to kill Rosaura. This reaction of Segismundo's is an indication of Segismundo's inability to use his natural liberty, which is denied by the breaking of law. That much is obvious; more revealing of Segismundo's limitations is what follows. Rosaura kneels before Segismundo and appeals

to his reason and better instincts:

> Si has nacido
> humano, baste el postrarme
> a tus pies para librarme. (187-9)

To Segismundo, who thinks that a man's birth is a crime (cf. vv. 111-2), Rosaura's conditional clause can only mean "because you are a criminal", and it is not so much reason and better instinct that tempers Segismundo's rage, but a confused mixture of emotions which he cannot understand, arising from his being strongly attracted to what seems to be a young man. Segismundo's words to Rosaura are punctuated with "aunque ...", but the listener may well feel that these aunques should be porques, for Segismundo's recitation is a description of the conditions of his life and the sources of his knowledge - evidence, in other words, of the limitations which could be inferred from his first monologue: Segismundo tells Rosaura (and the spectators) that he knows little of the world, that all he has ever seen of it has been the tower and "este rústico desierto" (199), that in all his life he has ever seen only one man, and that this one man is his sole source of information (vv. 191-207). The components of the sum total of Segismundo's knowledge and experience may thus be enumerated as follows: 1) Clotaldo, 2) Clotaldo's information, 3) nature (interpreted by Clotaldo), and 4) stars. Segismundo's confusion, and the silly rhetoric that expresses

it, cannot be wondered at.

Here again, Calderón sums up the situation dramatically, by presenting Clotaldo and showing us something of the quality of his teaching, and how the maestro applies the precepts of law, justice, pedagogy and so on, that he is supposed to be conveying to Segismundo. The practical demonstration of human justice given to Segismundo consists of his teacher, wearing a mask, shouting to his guards, also wearing masks, "... acudid, y vigilantes,/ sin que puedan defenderse,/ o prendeldes o mataldes." (284-6), the reason for this display being that Rosaura and Clarín have trespassed "contra el decreto del Rey" (299). For Segismundo, then, that is the way royal justice works, and since this is, to his knowledge, his first experience of it, we may judge its effect on him to be considerable.

We are then offered an indication of the quality of Clotaldo's teaching, in action:

> Si sabes que tus desdichas,
> Segismundo, son tan grandes,
> que antes de nacer moriste
> por ley del cielo; si sabes
> que aquestas prisiones son
> de tus furias arrogantes
> un freno que las detenga
> y una rienda que las pare,
> ¿por qué blasonas? (319-27)

The pedagogical quality is emphasised by Clotaldo's repetition of "si sabes", from which we may infer that Segismundo is

being told continually to accept that he died before he was born, "por ley del cielo", and that he is spending his life in solitary confinement in order to check his "furias arrogantes." The only sense in which there might be some truth in Clotaldo's statement that "antes de nacer, moriste/ por ley del cielo" is that natural law decrees that any creature which is born must eventually die in the flesh; but, as I pointed out before, a comment on Grace and redemption is called for if that is what Clotaldo means; within the plot, it is not what he means, but rather is he only telling Segismundo that the stars "foretold" Segismundo's fate. So that is the way Segismundo has learned about the crime of being born - no wonder he is confused; in any sense other than the religious, Clotaldo's statement is a contradiction, and doubly so as Segismundo is still alive. The contention that this condemnation is the law of heaven must, since the foetal Segismundo had committed no crime against it, seem to be an arbitrary and unjust law, and hence no law at all; worse, Clotaldo tells Segismundo that he is in prison not so much because he has committed a crime, but because he might, thereby admitting that Segismundo is suffering that hallmark of tyranny, preventive detention, and has suffered it from birth. All that is from the teacher to the pupil! We begin to see why Segismundo rails at the cielos, why he has such

confused notions of human crime. Meanwhile, his response to the arrival of Clotaldo is to utter irrational and impossible threats ("tengo de despedazarme ..." [314-6]), to which Clotaldo replies that he cannot kill himself because he is already dead! Is that the kind of reasoning Segismundo has been taught to accept?

In terms of liberty, the paragraph immediately above suggests two things. One is, that even when Segismundo attempts some admirable deed (in this case, defending Rosaura and Clarín), he still relapses into anarchy; the other, that Segismundo thinks that it is only his imprisonment that prevents him from indulging in this license, cf:

> ¡Ah cielos,
> qué bien hacéis en quitarme
> la libertad! Porque fuera
> contra vosotros gigante,
> que, para quebrar al sol
> esos vidrios y cristales,
> sobre cimientos de piedra
> pusiera montes de jaspe. (329-36)

For Segismundo, liberty means, not obedience to law, but uncontrolled assault on, not only human law, but also natural law (he thinks he can perform superhuman feats) and even divine law (he would attack the sun and the heavens). We know that that is impossible, but he does not, because he has never had the chance to test his desires against experience, and because the truth has been purposely hidden from him all

his life, as is demonstrated by yet another amazing reply from Clotaldo, who, in response to Segismundo's "sobre cimientos de piedra/ pusiera montes de jaspe", tells him that "Quizá porque no los pongas/ hoy padeces tantos males" (337-8): Clotaldo is here actively encouraging Segismundo's mistaken belief that - among other things - liberty would grant him such powers, without making the slightest attempt to warn him that - again among other things - liberty entails , not the breaking of law, but submission to it. We are shown the paradox of a man who spends his life in chains talking in terms of infinite ability, while the man responsible for the existence of this paradox makes no attempt whatsoever to resolve it for him.

As Segismundo is finally incarcerated once again, there can be no doubt in our minds that he has no conception of the nature of natural liberty or of any other kind of liberty, for he does not understand even the basic character of all these kinds of liberty - inevitably, because we have just watched demonstrations of the quality of law, the manner of his education, and the extent of his experience, and in none of these important components of liberty has he been shown the truth. The denial of liberty leaves only the force of instinct. We are left in no doubt as to where the responsibility for Segismundo's ignorance lies: it lies with Clotaldo,

the administrator of the "decreto del Rey", and with the King, who issued the decree. In the rest of the play, the consequences of Segismundo's condition are shown, to the last detail.

There is one more aspect of the opening scenes to be considered. I have examined the words and the action closely, but a play also offers a visual experience, and the picture of Segismundo in his cell, which Calderón is careful to describe, directs our attention to the aspects of his condition already discussed. Our attention is drawn specifically to his appearance by Rosaura: "En el traje de fiera yace un hombre/ de prisiones cargado ..." (96-7), and Calderón offers one of his few detailed stage directions, "Descúbrese Segismundo con una cadena y la luz, vestido de pieles" (101+). As Segismundo speaks, then, the salient features of the dramatic picture are not permitted to escape us: he is dressed in skins and dragging a chain - two different aspects of his loss of liberty, for the chain is man-made, while the skins were "made" by animals. Dressed as an animal, Segismundo <u>looks</u> as if he lacks the natural liberty that separates men from beasts; but he is also held by a chain, a patently man-made object, which suggests that the human agency responsible for chaining Segismundo must also be responsible for his animal appearance: the skins, like the chain, have been foisted on Segismundo by a

man, or men, and are thus an indication that someone wants to deny Segismundo his birthright, which includes his natural liberty. Underneath the skins, of course, there is a man, but he is naked, as are all men beneath their civilised trappings, and if divested of these skins he would have to learn, via the application of reason and intelligence, to manufacture the necessary garments, a task which it would not be possible to accomplish overnight.

The scene before us thus represents visually both the cause and the effect of Segismundo's condition: a human agency has sought to deny that Segismundo is a rational being, and to forbid him the opportunity of knowing and exercising the liberty with which he was born; they have succeeded to the extent that Segismundo's reason is retarded, his instincts do control him, and his liberty is correspondingly degenerate. To reverse this situation, Segismundo would have to learn from first principles, as a child does - but he is a grown man, and cannot be restrained as a child might be. That is the picture we watch, as we hear the words Segismundo utters.

My treatment of these opening scenes has been confined to a view of Segismundo's condition as a simple process of cause and effect which can neatly be fitted into the appropriate theoretical compartments. However, the spectator may well feel that the situation is not quite so simple.

It is clear that a course of action chosen after due ratiocination is free, while a course of action motivated by passion is not. The trouble is, that the effects of those two processes are not always easily divisible into the obviously good and the obviously evil. On one hand, behaviour motivated by passion can have good results - naturally, for the passions have their place in man's psychological hierarchy; on the other hand - and this constitutes a far greater problem - unexpected evil can result from behaviour guided, to all intents and purposes, by the dictates of reason. Thus, as an example of the first proposition, Segismundo refrains from slaughtering Rosaura, not because he concludes that it would be morally wrong, but because

> Tu voz pudo enternecerme,
> tu presencia suspenderme,
> y tu respeto turbarme (190-2)

- his reason is, if anything, further confused, as is suggested by the juggling with clichés in the second half of that speech (vv. 223-42). That is an instance of evil avoided by the impulse of instinct, and there are others in the play. But we soon see an example of the converse: the scene changes to the palace, where we are told of Basilio's great plan, ostensibly rational, and justified by Basilio on the grounds of raison d'état, with arguments in which Dunn sees "dispassionate

rationality"[7] but which he (Dunn) condemns because Basilio is "too logical and not sufficiently intuitive;"[8] it is that plan which brings about the chaos and disorder depicted in the play. Calderón seems to be pointing to an ambiguity inherent in both the demands of instinct and the processes of reason, and this ambiguity becomes increasingly apparent as the play progresses.

When Segismundo, with all his handicaps, is placed in situations which demand recognition of the responsibilities of liberty, the consequences, for himself and for those around him, are not surprising. First, he is taken to the palace. The tone of the second Act is set by the opening conversation between Clotaldo and Basilio, in which Clotaldo describes, in some detail, the process of drugging Segismundo by means of

> ... algunas hierbas,
> cuyo tirano poder
> y cuya secreta fuerza
> así al humano discurso
> priva, roba y enajena,
> que deja vivo cadáver
> a un hombre, y cuya violencia,
> adormecido, le quita
> los sentidos y potencias ... (993-1001)

Nearly every word there forms part of a metaphor of what Basilio and Clotaldo have done to Segismundo: employing

[7] op. cit., p. 192.

[8] op. cit., p. 195.

"tirano poder" and "secreta fuerza," they have robbed Segismundo of his ability to employ properly both his "discurso" and his "sentidos y potencias," and have turned him into a "vivo cadáver." Clotaldo then goes on to discuss whether or not that is feasible, and, following the metaphor, a moral judgement is invited: since "la humana malicia nuestra" can lead us to kill a man, it can obviously lead us to crippling a man's spirit, and the two crimes are, the analogy suggests, different only in degree - the latter being a milder poison, but still a poison. All that reminds us that Basilio's actions have been prompted by "humana malicia" (although presented by Basilio as raison d'état).

The same speech also offers a reminder of the situation brought about by the combination of Clotaldo's teaching and Segismundo's lack of experience. Clotaldo tells us that, when he took the drug to Segismundo's cell, he gave Segismundo another little lesson,

> Para levantarle más
> el espíritu a la empresa
> que solicitas, tomé
> por asunto la presteza
> de un águila caudalosa ... (1034 ff)

and the efficacy of Clotaldo's teaching may be seen in his report that Segismundo completely misconstrued the moral of the lesson (1048-1063), and was inspired to further delusions of grandeur, proclaiming that,

> ... si estoy
> sujeto, lo estoy por fuerza,
> porque voluntariamente
> a otro hombre no me rindiera. (1060-63)

In fact, this ambition of Segismundo's is a denial of the very liberty he could have, for it is a refusal to admit a law to which he should submit; Clotaldo apparently made no attempt to explain that, and hastily gave him the potion. The comic side of the situation is briefly revealed: Clotaldo's tutorials never have the desired effect on Segismundo, and, on this occasion, hoping to inspire Segismundo with thoughts of pomp and grandeur, he merely succeeds in arousing his fury!

Anyway, Segismundo is placed in court for the first time, and behaves exactly as one should expect, as he confronts, in rapid succession, the other protagonists. Clotaldo greets him first and tries to enlighten Segismundo's reason and to encourage in him a sense of prudence (1268-94); Segismundo's reaction is predictable: he tries to kill Clotaldo. He also tells Clotaldo the truth:

> Traidor fuiste con la ley,
> lisonjero con el Rey,
> y crüel conmigo fuiste; (1305-7)

- treachery, flattery, cruelty, these are accusations which are well-founded. Segismundo's reason is capable of grasping the answer to his life-long question, which has at last been given him, but he reacts with instinctive savagery.

Nevertheless, his behaviour at this point is understandable, for two reasons: a) because it is instinctive, and b) because his judgement on Clotaldo is reasonable. Once again, ambiguity: in his rage, Segismundo wants to kill Clotaldo, but even a disinterested judgement on Clotaldo is unlikely to differ much from Segismundo's. His eagerness to carry out the sentence on the spot lacks a certain judicial restraint, perhaps, but in this he is only demonstrating how well he has learned from his mentors: he saw the way Clotaldo behaved as a guardian of the law (when arresting Rosaura and Clarín in the tower) and the justice he tries to put into effect is of the same kind, the barbaric and merciless justice to which he himself has been subjected for twenty years. All Clotaldo can think of doing is giving Segismundo another of the "lessons" which have helped make him what he is:

> ¡Ay de tí,
> que soberbia vas mostrando,
> sin saber que estás soñando! (1316-8)

Segismundo, it seems, is being both passionate and rational; within the fiction of the drama, Segismundo is a man governed by instinct and entirely devoid of prudence, which means that his natural liberty is ineffective; but the spectator can see in his words a rational aspect which is entirely compatible with natural liberty, and thus is forced to realise that, in certain situations, passion and reason can seem to

merge. The implications of that ambiguity are made clearer in the next scene, where, after Clotaldo has left, the theme of justice is continued *via* the argument between Segismundo and the *Criado Segundo*, concerning the old problem of whether or not to obey an unjust law. Two viewpoints are put before us: "En lo que no es justa ley/ no ha de obedecer al Rey;" (1321-2), and "El no debió examinar/ si era bien hecho o mal hecho" (1324-5). The difficulty is, that both these viewpoints may be convincingly argued, and, as Calderón's audience knew, they have been argued ever since Christ's joke about what to render to Caesar and to God respectively. The point that the spectator should grasp is that Clotaldo's treachery, flattery and cruelty can be *either* condemned, on rational grounds, *or* excused, on equally rational grounds! Segismundo merely chooses the tag which best justifies his own passion (at the end of Act III, conditioned by fear, he *admires* Clotaldo's loyalty to Basilio, [vv. 3288-91]), and only a few minutes later he reverses his position: "Nada me parece justo/ en siendo contra mi gusto" (1417-18). How much natural liberty do we have in a practical sense, if we can use it to both condemn and condone sins such as treachery, flattery and cruelty? What does it mean to talk of natural liberty, when reason may be made to cloak a particular passion?

The same scene, as well as showing how well

Segismundo has learned his lessons relating to law and justice, also shows the dire consequences of his lack of experience and his need to acquire it. He throws the Criado Segundo to his death; why? To see if it could be done! "¡Por Dios, que lo he de probar!" (1427). For the spectator, the ambiguity is, this time, present in another way: a brutal act of savagery is not just susceptible of rational explanation, it is the logical thing for Segismundo to do. He does not know the limit of his own powers, except that Clotaldo had hinted to him that he might be able to build a tower and attack the heavens; here, he is told by a servant that "Con los hombres como yo/ no puede hacerse eso." (1425-6), and, while murder is irrational per se, for Segismundo it is an experiment, and, as such, displays a certain gruesome logic.

This lack of experience, the consequent absence of prudence, and what it portends for all concerned, is also apparent in Segismundo's brief conversation with Clarín. Clarín, sycophant extraordinary, aligns himself with Segismundo, because Segismundo looks as if he might be the winner (vv. 1328 ff.); his boot-licking is apparent to everyone except Segismundo, but Segismundo is fooled by Clarín because the latter is a professional, and Segismundo cannot see through the flattery: "Tú solo en tan nuevos mundos/ me has agradado." (1336-7). This problem of separating an apparent good from

a real good is again exemplified when Estrella enters, (v. 1375), and Segismundo is immediately entranced by her female beauty; instinct smothers reason, and absurd hyperboles are insufficient to hide what Segismundo really wants. The humour of this situation should not be missed: Segismundo, having just despised Astolfo's courtly chatter("Cansóme como llegó/ grave a hablarme" [1368-9]), immediately shows that he has learned yet another lesson as he addresses Estrella in similarly meaningless and insincere hyperboles.

The underlying irony of all this is that Segismundo is behaving like Basilio. Basilio's imprisonment of Segismundo, and his current test, is, like Segismundo's murder of the Criado Segundo, an experiment, to see if it can be done. Both experiments can be seen as logically justifiable, and yet, to the spectator, the disastrous consequences of both are apparent; if anything, Segismundo is the more rational of the two men, because, unlike Basilio, he cannot be expected to know any better. Segismundo's complete ignorance of the extent and limit of his own powers might have impinged upon Basilio's consciousness if the latter had paid more attention to Clotaldo's report of Segismundo's reaction to the lesson on the eagle; as it is, when the two do come face-to-face, it is Segismundo, the man raised as a beast, who appears more rational than Basilio, the self-styled sabio! Segismundo's

first words to Basilio manifest, on one level, a delinquent unawareness of having done wrong, but, on another level, the simple and unanswerable logic already noted. All that Basilio can say, however, is that he is disappointed, because he had hoped to find Segismundo "advertido,/ de hados y estrellas triunfando" (1450-51). For the spectator, who can see that the "hados y estrellas" in Segismundo's life are Basilio himself, that can only mean that Segismundo, if he is to enjoy his natural liberty, must be free of the influence of Basilio, at least as long as Basilio represents unjust law.

That ironic flavour of the presentation of these two protagonists is sustained throughout the rest of this scene, in which most of what Basilio says can and should be turned against himself; Segismundo, quite rightly and rationally does indeed throw it back in his face, and it is Basilio who, in his unreason, fails to see the truth. Far from accepting his responsibility, Basilio sinks to the depths of irresponsibility; he warns Segismundo,

> que seas humilde y blando,
> porque quizá estás soñando,
> aunque ves que estás despierto. (1529-31)

Basilio is thereby telling Segismundo that the latter must behave properly or there will be trouble, so that the concept of virtue which Basilio is impressing upon Segismundo is that of doing good out of fear; that is a denial of natural liberty,

which involves the voluntary choice of the good, and, of course, it is also a denial of the proper meaning of virtue - yet that is the lesson Basilio wants Segismundo to learn.

Segismundo, not surprisingly, is reduced to a state of confusion, of unreason, of helplessness; he was lied to in the prison, now he is being lied to outside the prison. The silly and irresponsible warning he has just received is repeated by Clotaldo when, shortly afterwards, he finds Segismundo about to assault Rosaura. As with Estrella, the comedy of the scene lies in the fact that Segismundo at first tries to conquer Rosaura the "proper" way, that is, employing the inflated pretentiousness he has learned from his short stay in the Court; this time, the comedy is heightened by the presence of Clotaldo, hiding in the wings, watching this embarrassing contact between his public and private pasts. Full of pomp and bombast, Clotaldo is here because "A Segismundo reducir deseo,/ porque en fin le he criado" (1618-9) - a statement which is as self-incriminating as Basilio's "Bien me agradeces ..." (1500) - and, as he watches, Segismundo tells Rosaura menacingly that "... la resistencia/ es veneno cruel de mi paciencia" (1632-3), the word <u>veneno</u> - repeated by Rosaura - reminding us, <u>via</u> the drug speech at the beginning of the Act, of the framework of the whole situation, with Basilio and Clotaldo poisoning Segismundo mentally and spiritually.

In the scene witnessed by Clotaldo and the spectator the theme of ambiguity is continued: Segismundo's behaviour, although wholly conditioned by passion, is, at the same time, still following a logical pattern. Just as his murder of the Criado Segundo is explicable on the grounds that he is trying to garner the beginnings of the elementary experience he needs to acquire the prudence demanded of him by Basilio and Clotaldo, so too is his assault on Rosaura, who, in exactly the same way as the Criado Segundo, provokes him into assaulting her: "ROSAURA. ... mi respeto no osara, ni pudiera./ SEGISMUNDO. Sólo por ver si puedo ..." (1637-8). A minute later, when he admits, "Soy tirano" (1666), he is admitting his irrationality, since a tyrant is, by definition, a ruler who defies natural law; but there, too, Segismundo is following a logical pattern, for Basilio and Clotaldo have raised him by methods of tyranny, and Rosaura has just called him a tyrant to his face, so what has he got to lose by admitting it and acting accordingly?

As Clotaldo watches, he is confronted with the products of both his reason (Segismundo, his intellectual progeny) and his passion (Rosaura, his physical progeny), conscious that both are letting him down in their respective ways. He tries to restrain Segismundo by repeating Basilio's warning ("y no .../ seas crüel, porque quizá es un sueño" [1678-9]), but, once again, Segismundo, his lust turning to anger,

decorates his passion with unanswerable logic: "Veré, dándote muerte,/ si es sueño o si es verdad." (1682-3). Clotaldo, as so often happens, finds himself on his knees before Segismundo; Astolfo intervenes, Basilio arrives to stop the fight, and decides to deprive Segismundo of his physical liberty once more.

Segismundo's brief career in the palace thus tells us all we need to know about his liberty, and it tells us a little about our own. Segismundo has no liberty: his reason malformed, his knowledge perverted, robbed of the guidance of just law, denied the experience which fosters prudence, unable to choose the good because he cannot distinguish it from evil, he is at the mercy of his instincts. His behaviour is just as irrational as we might expect - violent, impulsive and destructive - but the factor which makes us aware of the problems of our own liberty is that we can see a certain reason behind his bestiality, as some of the foregoing examples illustrate. In other words, the depressing truth about natural liberty that we may see in the work is, that while liberty exists by virtue of man's being a rational creature, able to choose his good actions instead of being driven to them by instinct, that vital distinction can sometimes disappear, when an action may result from both an evil instinct and a rational analysis. Such a situation must obviously reflect the inadequacies of

human reason (and of human law), which cannot cope with the several different facets presented by any one set of circumstances. This problem becomes acute in the last scene, which I shall examine after looking at the way in which the events of Act III proceed to the conclusion presented on stage.

When Segismundo is put back in prison, the stage directions are, once again, precise: "Descúbrese Segismundo como al principio, con pieles y cadena, durmiendo en el suelo" (2017) - chains and skins again, but, this time, no flickering lights. His sleep is the sleep induced by the drugs of Basilio and Clotaldo. He has been stripped of his finery: it was not his, and he did not choose to wear it, but was decked out in it at the whim of Basilio; now Basilio has just as arbitrarily re-clothed him in his bestial garb. Looking at the scene as a picture, the difference between this and the previous picture of Segismundo in his cell is that, now, Basilio and Clotaldo are also in the cell. The two elders are trapped, forced to continue their tyranny, which is disruptive of liberty for everyone - Segismundo, themselves, the whole of Poland. They listen to Segismundo talking in his sleep, as Segismundo dreams of the indulgence in license which is so symptomatic of his loss of liberty. The picture also picks out that theme: a man dreams of license, but he is lying in a prison. License and liberty are incompatible; to suppose that liberty permits

license is to live in a dream. But we all might dream this dream: Segismundo dreams of "el gran teatro del mundo" (2073), of which we are all a part, not only in the metaphorical sense meant by Segismundo, but also in the literal sense that we are in a theatre as we watch all this happening; for us, too, the assumption that we may do exactly as we please, and get away with it, is a dream.

When Segismundo awakes, he is offered another little lesson, and at the end of the Act he takes stock of the intellectual, sensual and social experiences he has undergone, and deduces therefrom certain principles which he deems worth adopting. Since they condition his behaviour in Act III, it is worth considering closely his progress to the close of Act II.

First, we find that Segismundo is not convinced that his day in the palace was a dream (only Basilio and Clotaldo could be surprised at that); nevertheless, Clotaldo's lies about its being a dream serve to confuse him sufficiently for him not to feel certain of anything. Apart from the lies about the dream, the only other lesson Clotaldo gives Segismundo is the famous lines,

> mas en sueños fuera bien
> entonces honrar a quien
> te crió en tantos empeños,
> Segismundo; que aun en sueños
> no se pierde el hacer bien. (2143-7)

The amazing irony of Clotaldo's still claiming a kind of paternity over Segismundo is one thing, but the bargain he strikes with Segismundo is something else: "I've been good to you in life (in the tower), so you should be good to me in dreams (in the palace)." That means absolutely nothing, but Segismundo, too confused to be able to spot the absurdity of it, thinks it does mean something. Even more damaging to Segismundo's reasoning potential are Clotaldo's parting words, "aun en sueños/ no se pierde el hacer bien." As Professor Wilson has suggested,[9] it is a paradoxical statement in that Clotaldo is suggesting that a rational choice can be made in a dream, and dreams are irrational and uncontrollable; for the spectator, though, the rub is that real life, too, can sometimes seem irrational and uncontrollable, making the problem of how to "hacer bien" (which entails acting in accordance with reason and prudence) correspondingly acute. Within the dramatic context, however, uncritical acceptance by Segismundo of Clotaldo's proposition would imply a failure to understand the function of free choice in the pursuit of the good, that is, a failure to understand what it means to "hacer bien".

[9] "La Vida es Sueño," in Critical Essays on the Theatre of Calderón, ed. by Bruce Wardropper, New York, 1965, pp. 69-89, v. p. 73.

As we see, Segismundo does accept the premise unquestioningly: "Es verdad; pues reprimamos/ esta fiera condición ..." (2148-9). His view of his "fiera condición" as being the main obstacle to "hacer bien" is certainly accurate, but the "fiera condición" is not something that Segismundo, or any other man, can repress overnight, especially as Segismundo thinks that the real world is an irrational world, a dream-world - "... el vivir sólo es soñar" (2154). Segismundo goes on to say,

> y la experiencia me enseña
> que el hombre que vive sueña
> lo que es hasta despertar. (2155-7)

The important phrase there, "la experiencia me enseña," makes it worth our while recapitulating the experiences on which he is building his <u>weltanschauung</u>, since we have witnessed, in some detail, the sources of what Segismundo has learned. His experience may be summarised roughly as follows:

1) the experiences and life that he had before his first release from the prison;
2) the experience of his day in the palace - a fake experience arranged by another man, which was, for Segismundo, irrational and involuntary;
3) his fairly successful anarchy and rebellion within 2), above;
4) Clotaldo's so-called education and lectures on morality,

and the examples he has been set by Clotaldo and others;

5) the powerful memory of Rosaura, often regarded by critics as an important part of Segismundo's realisation of the truth.

Of those, no. 5), expressed as,

> Sólo a una mujer amaba;
> que fue verdad, creo yo,
> en que todo se acabó,
> y esto solo no se acaba (2134-7)

is of particular interest. On one hand, it may be seen as an expression of a dawning sensibility in Segismundo (cf. the views of Wilson, Whitby, Sloman, Sciacca, etc.); on the other hand, we may recall that this "love" of Segismundo's found its physical expression in an attempt to force himself upon Rosaura, supported by an attempt to murder Clotaldo when the latter tried to intervene, and that Segismundo was captivated by Rosaura <u>even when he thought she was a man</u>. We have here the possibility of two widely divergent interpretations, but the words we hear from Segismundo do not help us to decide which would be the more appropriate - just because Segismundo uses the word "amaba" does not make him different from the rest of mankind, most of whom are susceptible to the <u>Hermosura</u> which, as in <u>No Hay Más Fortuna Que Dios</u>, will become only a skeleton. Furthermore, the words do not help <u>Segismundo</u> to distinguish between lust and sensibility, and yet he clings to those feelings as being

his most convincing connection with reality.

Such is the experience from which Segismundo, as he continues to soliloquise, eventually reaches the conclusion that "toda la vida es sueño,/ y los sueños sueños son" (2186-7). His ruminations on life's being a dream (vv. 2158-77) offer thoughts that are false in one sense - that men and their circumstances are somehow separate from reality, somehow unreal - and true in another, the sense that Wilson describes, viz., of life as a transient phenomenon, etc. This true sense is, however, really rather banal, a commonplace, as Sloman says,[10] of both Oriental and Christian philosophy, and would not be helpful to Segismundo even if he could be said to have realised it. Calderón seems to point to the banality of Segismundo's conclusion by putting such statements in the mouths of, first, Basilio:

> porque en el mundo, Clotaldo,
> todos los que viven sueñan, (1148-9)
>
> cuanto te ha pasado,
> como fue bien del mundo, fue soñado,
> (1722-3)

and then Clarín,

> No acabes de despertar,
> Segismundo, para verte
> perder, trocada la suerte,
> siendo tu gloria fingida
> una sombra de la vida
> y una llama de la muerte, (2022-27)

[10] Introduction to La Vida es Sueño, p. xi.

who is mocked, when he says it, by Clotaldo:

> A quien sabe discurrir
> así, es bien que se prevenga
> una estancia donde tenga
> harto lugar de argüir. (2028-31)

But can Segismundo be said to understand even that truism? He goes on to say,

> Yo sueño que estoy aquí
> destas prisiones cargado,
> y soñé que en otro estado
> más lisonjero me vi. (2178-81)

Having watched the "otro estado", and watching him now, we know that, within the fiction of the play, his conclusions are quite untrue: Segismundo (even an actor) lying there in chains, saying he is not lying there in chains, offers a picture which seems to limit the usefulness of discussing the play as a paradigm of a metaphysical or philosophical system.

Segismundo's conclusions are muddled, but the spectator may see a certain truth - apart from the commonplace - behind his confusion, which suggests an ambiguity that may be seen in his concluding question and in the answers he supplies:

> ¿Qué es la vida? Un frenesí.
> ¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión,
> una sombra, una ficción,
> y el mayor bien es pequeño. (2182-5)

These words are false within the context of Christian belief (they are made meaningless by their very vagueness), but true in the case of Segismundo. Life <u>can seem</u> to be an illusion,

a shadow, a fiction, if one has been subjected to the same sort of deceit and maltreatment as has Segismundo. The truth one may see, then, is partly, that men can make life confused and dreamlike for others (as Basilio has done for Segismundo), and partly, and more important, that men may reduce life to this level for themselves, by their own delusions; the latter theme is clearly depicted by Calderón through the careers of virtually every other character in the play.[11] The consequences for liberty of Segismundo's arguments and conclusions may be inferred when we remember that dreams are irrational and involuntary: to say that life is a dream is thus to deny the essence of natural liberty, which is reason and choice. There is no liberty in a dream.

In Act III these themes are followed to their logical conclusions (which are not necessarily conclusive).

[11]That is Wilson's approach, of course (e.g., op. cit., p. 87); however, I would extend it even to the characters whom Wilson excepts, viz., Clotaldo, Rosaura, and the eventual Segismundo. Clotaldo, a victim of both his personal and his political pasts, is thrown into confusion right at the start (cf. 396-8: "Aun no sé determinarme/ si tales sucesos son/ ilusiones o verdades.") and spends most of the play in panic and turmoil. Rosaura is in a similar daze from her first appearance, "... sin más camino/ que el que me dan las leyes del destino,/ ciega y desesperada ..." (11-13), through the comedy of her succeeding complaints (such as "¿Qué haré en tantas confusiones, [etc.]", [vv. 1884 ff.]), to the final joke of herachieving her ambition only to hear Astolfo reveal his contempt for her (vv. 3262-6). Segismundo, meanwhile, is still under discussion above.

Segismundo, on his release from prison, now has to attempt to learn what constitutes a good choice, armed with the knowledge and experience we have seen him acquire.

The soldiers tell Segismundo, as they release him, "La libertad/ te espera" (2304-5). In the context, they mean freedom from physical captivity, but there are other implications, for we know that incarceration deprives Segismundo of other liberties. The soldiers say they are releasing him because they want to be free from foreign rule (which may or may not be true: after the tumult and the shouting, their leader asks Segismundo for his reward....) and Segismundo eventually accepts this task:

> en mí lleváis
> quien os libre, osado y diestro,
> de extranjera esclavitud. (2374-6)

Poland's freedom from foreign rule has been jeopardised because the ruler, Basilio, corrupted his own natural liberty, defied all precepts of moral law, and thus compromised the liberty of his subjects, who had to obey his law; for Segismundo to guarantee liberty in the realm, he must show himself cognisant of the demands of his own natural liberty, by demonstrating his reason and prudence. Not surprisingly, though, Segismundo, in his reply to the soldiers, does not display any great powers of reason and discrimination. His knowledge is limited, his experience minute, and he is not convinced that the

circumstances are real. He clings to the "lessons" learned in the palace and in the tower: "sé bien que la vida es sueño" (2343); he elects to believe that his experience in the tower was only an "anuncio" (2356), but it was not, and it is a <u>non-sequitur</u> to say that

> pues que la vida es tan corta,
> soñemos, alma, soñemos
> otra vez, (2358-60)

and meaningless to say,

> pero ha de ser
> con atención y consejo
> de que hemos de despertar
> deste gusto al mejor tiempo;
> que llevándolo sabido,
> será el desengaño menos;
> que es hacer burla del daño
> adelantarle el consejo. (2360-67)

In a dream, we do not think of waking, nor do we behave with "atención y consejo"; in the context, "es hacer burla del daño/ adelantarle el consejo" can be taken to mean only that Segismundo should avoid spiked drinks, in which case, the consequences of his discovery of this would be interesting.

Segismundo, judging him by normal criteria, is not reasoning very well, which is partly because he <u>really</u> thinks he is dreaming, as he reveals at the end of all this cogitation:

> Mas, si antes desto despierto,
> ¿no será bien no decirlo,
> supuesto que no he de hacerlo? (2383-5)

I am emphasising that point in order to make it clear that,

at this stage within the dramatic fiction, Segismundo is not using the metaphors about the transience of earthly things to which the vida=sueño equation is usually seen to refer. Hence, when Clotaldo arrives a moment later, Segismundo repeats his lesson, the last thing he had learned from his teacher:

> Que estoy soñando, y que quiero
> obrar bien, pues no se pierde
> obrar bien, aun entre sueños. (2399-2401)

That seems genuinely pathetic: Segismundo, like a child, is trying to show that he has learned his tables, and, like a child, he stamps his foot when Clotaldo refuses to indulge him. What stops him from winning Clarín's bet for him? As Wilson suggests à propos of Segismundo's original "reprimamos",[12] the wrong motive: not reason, but fear. One instinct is thus held in check only by another, and after packing off Clotaldo to see Basilio, Segismundo repeats the lesson which he seems to have learned by rote: "Mas, sea verdad o sueño,/ obrar bien es lo que importa" (2423-4). Again, an admirable sentiment; but the determination to "obrar bien", when not tempered and guided by reason and effected with prudence, can be as dangerous as the desire to obrar mal; Basilio, after all, thought he was doing the right thing.

There are other points to be made here, though.

[12] Op. cit., p. 74.

One is, that Segismundo's analysis of his situation is as rational as can be expected in the circumstances; another, that even if he does restrain himself only through fear rather than reason, that does not make him markedly different from most of the spectators; another, that this passion of the soul does at least exert a rational effect on him - he treats Clotaldo with mercy and magnanimity. But there is a further problem for the spectator: Segismundo tells Clotaldo, "Clotaldo, vuestro valor/ os envidio y agradezco" (2414-5), but how far is he right to compliment Clotaldo's courage? One factor to be considered is that Clotaldo is certainly brave in submitting to probable death at Segismundo's hands for the sake of his allegiance to Basilio, but other factors are the tyranny that that allegiance entails, and Clotaldo's own avoidance of personal decision and responsibility (re. Violante, Rosaura and Segismundo in particular), both of which result in Clotaldo's slithering from one mess to another, finding himself at the mercy of Clarín (of all people), having to lock him up quietly and illegally, and so on. There is more than one way of estimating Clotaldo's valor, and the use of the word demands a critical reaction, not only here, but also in other scenes where it is flung about emotively and equivocally.[13] There

[13]Calderón puts us on our guard right at the start, when the stock expression, "Mi valor lo dice," is parodied by

is, though, no hint of any reservation by Segismundo in his admiration of Clotaldo's valor, and the impression we are given, here, is that Segismundo's reason is bemused by words - a familiar problem, which now and throughout the rest of the play becomes important, not so much for the fictional Segismundo, as for the spectator, who also likes to obrar bien, and who is made to face the fact that his difficulties are the same as Segismundo's.

Thus, when we next see Segismundo, we are again confronted with this problem of trying to exercise our reason, effectively enough to make judgements, via the distorting medium of language. Segismundo is still "vestido de pieles" (2655+), and Calderón's attention to this detail again invites us to consider its implications. He is still talking as before, lost in dreams of infinite ability, restraining himself only because of his fear (vv. 2656-71). When Rosaura arrives on the scene, we have another opportunity to try to assess Segismundo's percipience, his capacity to choose between

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Clarín, who, in a moment of tension, says "bien mi temor lo dice" (77, and v. Sloman's note) - a joke which really conditions the words throughout the play. Thus we may raise an eyebrow at Clotaldo's description of Rosaura, "Mi hijo es, mi sangre tiene,/ pues tiene valor tan grande" (455-6), and we may even see comic irony in Roaura's later affirmation of her own "valor," e.g., when having a tantrum in front of her father, (v. 2644), having spoken fulsomely of his "valor" at the beginning of the quarrel (vv. 2492-2500), unaware that he is (to quote her) the "traidor" (v. 2737) who betrayed her mother and is still reluctant to admit he is her father, etc.

a real and a false good. Previously, Segismundo's feelings for Rosaura have been shaped by his reaction to her appearance; now he is to have the opportunity to judge her real self, as she delivers her autobiography at great length, following that by telling him what he must do, and telling him that she has come to help him ("vengo a ayudarte ..." [2886])! Her "help", as it happens, consists of plunging poor Segismundo deeper into confusion, principally with the words,

> La segunda [vez] me admiraste
> mujer, cuando fue la pompa
> de tu majestad un sueño,
> una fantasma, una sombra (2720-23)

- she tells him that his day in the palace was a dream, so that, at the end of her speech, Segismundo is frantically trying to work out what on earth he is to infer from that (vv. 2922 ff.). His reason is thus further bemused before he even begins to grapple with this latest test. Can we, as spectators, do any better?

It is not easy to decide how to regard Rosaura. She has been called a symbol of honour, reason, prudence etc.; she has also been called "La reina de los hipérboles" and "una hipérbole absurda."[14] There are several points in favour of the former view:

[14] Augusto Cortina, Prólogo to his edition of La Vida es Sueño and El Alcalde de Zalamea, "Clásicos Castellanos," no. 138, Madrid, 1964, p. xlvi.

1) she has been betrayed, and is determined to obtain reparations from her betrayer, thus upholding a moral principle important to society;

2) her affair with Astolfo could be assumed to be a matrimonio clandestino, as Parker suggests, rather than the usual silly, sordid or sentimental liaison;

3) she is always telling us that her honour is the most important thing in the world; and

4) whatever folly she may have committed is not unknown to the rest of the human race.

The alternative view, that she is a parody of the dishonoured heroine, may be sustained by the tedious platitudes with which she regales all around her, her constant attempts to persuade other people to extricate her from a situation stemming from her own irresponsibility, her intellectual confusion (reflected in her sartorial confusion), and so on. Calderón seems to suggest Rosaura's comedy in the scene under discussion, where it is revealed that her "problem" is merely a repetition of the performance of her mother, of which Rosaura is, fittingly, the result!

But if we cannot decide for certain how to regard Rosaura, we are no more clever than Segismundo, who sees only the surface appearance and hears only what she tells him, which is, that her interests and his are of equal importance

(vv. 2892-2901), of which he allows himself to be convinced. This latter belief is, nevertheless, the main factor dissuading him from trying to take advantage of Rosaura: "más a un príncipe le toca/ el dar honor que quitarle" (2987-8). Even that questionable analysis of the situation might be construed as a victory for reason over instinct, and thus the beginnings of a proper use of natural liberty; but we are not allowed to assume this, because Segismundo's restraint finally depends, not on the reason and the will, but on retreat: "Huyamos de la ocasión,/ que es muy fuerte," (2992-3), and, as he leaves, he is still refusing to look at her, for the same reason: "que no mire tu hermosura/ quien ha de mirar tu honra" (3014-5).

As before, the spectator must feel some sympathy for Segismundo. Just as when he faced Clotaldo, he is <u>trying</u> to "obrar bien," and achieves a certain negative success in that he does not indulge his worst instincts; but even that limited success is only a product of his misunderstanding of his real situation - he still thinks he is dreaming.[15]

[15]It will be apparent that I see some difficulties in the way of accepting the view of those critics who suggest that this scene makes Segismundo aware of his true situation, and shows Rosaura bringing him to his senses at last, to the extent that he is able to overcome his passions. He has, after all, done nothing that he did not manage to do in Act I, when his impulse to kill Rosaura was overcome; if Rosaura makes him see the truth simply because she appears in both

The problem of reason, and its role in analysing the situation, is suggested in an interesting remark Segismundo makes at the turning point of his struggle with his sexual urge: "Mas con mis razones propias/ vuelvo a convencerme a mí," (2967-8). Referring to his thoughts as expressed in vv. 2950-2966, it is certainly true that the words present a convincing case for obeying his instincts; on the other hand, his reasons for not grasping this opportunity are also an example of words confusing the issue. His words lead us into the same problems of irony and imprecision as did his compliments to Clotaldo, confusing us with a conflict between general and particular truths. The important general truth is, "más a un príncipe le toca/ el dar honor que quitarle" (2987-8), but does the particular truth that "Rosaura está sin honor" (2986) mean that he has to be "de su honra/ ... conquistador/ antes que de mi corona" (2989-91), if she threw away her honour of her own accord, and if there is nothing Segismundo can do to restore it, and if there are things to attend to (such as a

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tower and palace, and thus shows both to be real, it is odd that the appearances of both Clotaldo and Clarín do not produce the same effect; if Rosaura is some kind of allegorical representative of reason and enlightenment (cf., e.g., Cesareo Bandera, "la razón ... estaría representada por Rosaura, el jinete del hipogrifo," on p. 81 of "El itinerario de Segismundo en La Vida es Sueño," Hispanic Review, XXXV, 1967, pp. 69-84), it is odd that Segismundo should deny himself Rosaura at the end of the play; and so on.

civil war) that are more important than her ambivalent honour? Segismundo's conclusion is no less a result of the persuasive vagueness of words than was his previous attitude, "soñemos dichas ahora," (2965). Indeed, the comment, "Mas con mis razones propias/ vuelvo a convencerme a mí" could refer either to his first attitude ("soñemos dichas ...") or to his second attitude ("que de su honra/ he de ser conquistador/ antes que de mi corona"), or to both ("vuelvo a convencerme a mí ...", with emphasis on the "vuelvo a ..."). Our attention, at any rate, is drawn to the distorting ambiguity of words, words which can condition the reason, and to Segismundo's, and our own, susceptibility to this. All that is in our minds as the play approaches its climax.

The tenor of the closing scenes is mooted by Basilio's dictum uttered as he flees the field of battle:

> En batallas tales
> los que vencen son leales,
> los vencidos los traidores (3065-7)

- Calderón's equivalent of Sir John Harington's "Treason doth never thrive; for if it prosper, none dare call it treason." In the bitterness of defeat, Basilio points out a truth which the spectator's knowledge or experience will surely confirm. But it is more than just a mere historical or political fact: the dictum calls into question once more the usefulness of words themselves. Confining ourselves to the political context,

it indicates that the meanings of words, the values they represent, and the decisions which depend on them, are subservient to the exigencies of political expediency. Basilio's very next words offer an instance of the confusion which arises from such distortion:

> Huyamos, Clotaldo, pues,
> del crüel, del inhumano
> rigor de un hijo tirano. (3068-70)

The audience knows that if Segismundo is cruel, inhuman and tyrannical, it is because his father was cruel, inhuman and tyrannical, and that if Basilio is fleeing from Segismundo, he is fleeing from the consequences of his own behaviour, from his own responsibilities.

The ambiguities suggested by the co-existence of both approbatory and censorious views of Segismundo and other characters, a difficulty to which I have tried to draw attention, finally become overwhelming in the last scene of the play.[16] It is preceded by Segismundo's I-could-have-told-you-so speech (3158-3247) in which he establishes himself as a rightful successor to Basilio by displaying the same kind of language and thought as did Basilio at the beginning: we have

[16] T. E. May's article, "Segismundo y el soldado rebelde," analyses important aspects of this difficulty; I concur with virtually everything said in that article, and will note specific points of agreement where they arise.

the same paradoxes (chatter about horoscopes), the same vocabulary, the same quick and easy aphorisms on life, the same style, the same basis of amor propio - and even a certain element of reason. Segismundo keeps telling us that he is "un bruto, una fiera humana" (3175), and the human part of him seems to be rather as we might have anticipated from what we have seen him learn from other human beings. When he expresses his good intentions, therefore - "hoy ha de ser la más alta [victoria]/ vencerme a mí," (3257-8) - we have to be prepared to consider both the decisions he makes and their effects, as he sets about re-imposing some kind of order on the chaos left behind by Basilio's good intentions. Before considering those decisions, I would like to examine Segismundo's closing speech, to try to ascertain as much as possible about the state of the mind that is making the decisions, and in particular to see how far he has attained the liberty which is often ascribed to him.

When Segismundo tells us,

> ... fue mi maestro un sueño,
> y estoy temiendo en mis ansias
> que he de despertar y hallarme
> otra vez en mi cerrada
> prisión, (3306-10)

he tells us two things: 1) that he has been conditioned by that which is irrational and involuntary - "si fue mi maestro un sueño" - and, 2) that he is now motivated by an instinct,

a passion of the soul - "estoy temiendo ..." Reason, choice, and the subjugation of the instincts, those vital facets of natural liberty, are all, by his own admission, out of Segismundo's reach.[17] Those few words thus constitute a complete negation of his own liberty, and when he goes on,

> Y cuando no sea,
> el soñarlo sólo basta;
> pues así llegué a saber
> que toda la dicha humana,
> en fin, pasa como un sueño, (3310-14)

he is telling us that the dream has taught him that all human happiness is subject to the same choice-denying pressures. The implications of that are, that all men lack the natural liberty he denies himself, and that he cannot distinguish a real dicha from an illusory dicha, the latter being, again, the only possibility for all men. The final lines,

> Y quiero hoy aprovecharla
> el tiempo que me durare,
> pidiendo de nuestras faltas
> perdón, pues de pechos nobles
> es tan propio el perdonarlas, (3315-9)

tell us that he is attracted by the illusory dicha, the happiness which passes as a dream, and is going to get as much of it as he can; such a clear predilection for earthly goods constitutes another denial of liberty, since, through his

[17] cf. T. E. May, referring to vv. 3305-10: "No es así que habla el juez seguro y sereno. El temor no tiene pecho noble, y es a veces mal consejero," op. cit., p. 74.

natural liberty, man is not chained to particular earthly goods (because he possesses a soul which aspires to divine goods).

All the while, as he is talking, Segismundo is, still, dressed in skins, and, just as before, the picture he presents depicts the implications of his words and behaviour. It is difficult to see how Segismundo can be said to have acquired the only kinds of liberty which matter, viz., the natural liberty which makes possible the hope of moral liberty, and which offers the means whereby to attain it. As I remarked above, none of this is surprising in view of his education and experience, but it does have an effect on the spectator who ponders the problems posed by Segismundo's decisions, at which I now propose to look, for the spectator has to judge Segismundo's actions, just as Segismundo has to judge others' actions.

Rosaura is to marry Astolfo, Estrella is to marry Segismundo; Basilio having been forgiven already, Clotaldo is now forgiven too; the rebel soldier is condemned; Segismundo swears he has learned his lesson and realised that life's pleasures are transient. As the traditional view of the play maintains, those judgements can be regarded as explicable, on their respective grounds of honour, the enforcement of promises, the payment of debts, duty to parents, magnanimity to

enemies, ejemplariedad, and so on. On the other hand, as H. B. Hall began to point out,[18] we can regard those same judgements with a certain scepticism, and feel that, even if Segismundo's decisions are meant to impose a moral order, they are, as T. E. May indicates,[19] scarcely prudent, scarcely indicative of the kind of practical political sense a ruler ought to apply for the greater common good. It would be useful to elaborate this alternative view.

Immediately noticeable is that the betrothed parties have recently been on opposite sides in the civil war: Rosaura aligned herself with Segismundo, while Astolfo and Estrella supported Basilio. Furthermore, the arrangement forces Astolfo to blurt out, in front of Rosaura, that

> ella no sabe quién es;
> y es bajeza y es infamia
> casarme yo con mujer ... (3264-6)

- he had never had, it seems, the slightest intention of marrying her, as she is of inferior status. Rosaura's reaction to this information (she had recently been planning to kill Astolfo) is left to the imagination of producer and actress, as are her feelings when Clotaldo admits that he is her father, i.e., the "traidor" she referred to just before the battle (2737). It is in these circumstances that Astolfo agrees to

[18] op. cit.

[19] op. cit.

keep his word, (vv. 3277-8). Segismundo then foists himself upon Estrella, his reason being

> porque Estrella
> no quede desconsolada,
> viendo que príncipe pierde
> de tanto valor y fama (3278-81)

- whether Estrella ever thought of Astolfo in those terms is questionable, but anyway, all she now gets is a <u>substitute</u> for him. Clotaldo receives an accolade for his loyal service to Basilio (vv. 3288-91), the nature of which we have had the opportunity of observing all through the play, perhaps with the feeling that not only is his service grossly inefficient, but that loyalty to tyranny is not the most desirable quality in a public servant.[20]

We might reflect on Segismundo's priorities: since his second release from the tower, he has tended to regard the conventions of courtly love as being of greater moment than affairs of state (cf., e.g., "que de su honra/ he de ser conquistador/ antes que de mi corona."), and, accordingly, the first acts of his reign are the arranging of marriages. Now, at last, he turns his attention to an affair of state:

[20] In an interesting article, "El conflicto de Clotaldo: versión psicológica," <u>La Torre</u>, Año XVII, Núm. 65, July-Sep. 1969, pp. 69-83, Eugenio Suárez-Galbán has this to say about Clotaldo: "Esa lealtad al rey en la que otros han visto idealismo y fuerza de carácter resulta ser, pues, el escudo de un carácter débil," p. 82.

the rebel leader who released him asks the obvious question,

> Si así a quien no te ha servido
> honras, ¿a mí, que fui causa
> del alboroto del reino,
> y de la torre en que estabas
> te saqué, qué me darás? (3292-96)

Segismundo unhesitatingly condemns him to life imprisonment: "que el traidor no es menester,/ siendo la traición pasada." (3300-01) - a traitor is a traitor and therefore bad (even if he did "betray" tyranny ...). But Segismundo has just reinstated Clotaldo, who, as Segismundo knows, is as much, if not more of, a traitor than the soldier, Segismundo himself having told Clotaldo as much in Act II: "Traidor fuiste con la ley ..." (1305), "... vil, infame, y traidor,/ .../ ¿cómo a tu patria le has hecho/ tal traición?" (1295-1301). Worse (in Segismundo's eyes), Clotaldo is also a traitor in matters which Segismundo considers more important than affairs of state, viz., courtly romance - Segismundo knows that Clotaldo betrayed Violante; and, if he is going to play with the term "traición" in the way that he does with the soldier, what about Basilio's betrayal of divine and natural law, eventually supported by Astolfo, Estrella and Clotaldo? Even more to the point, if the soldier is a traitor, what does that make Segismundo?[21]

[21] cf. T. E. May; "Si el soldado fue traidor contra un rey legítimo, también lo fue Segismundo; y él mismo reconoce su

From this alternative angle, then, Segismundo's reign begins with his forgiving a tyrant (Basilio), pardoning a traitor (Clotaldo), pandering to a silly girl (Rosaura), overlooking the attempts of foreign pretenders (Astolfo and Estrella) to claim the throne, and punishing a soldier, who fought for the liberty of his country and for divine and natural laws of primogeniture, by locking him in the same tower to which he (Segismundo) was condemned for life. We have just witnessed the strife which ensued once it was discovered that Segismundo was living in the tower: what will happen now that the tower is occupied by one of the winners of the war? Or, to take T. E. May's view of the situation, "Con tal príncipe, ¿quién puede estar seguro?"[22]

So, there are at least two sides to the final situation. Is Segismundo a King or is he a Tyrant? On the one hand, he says he is determined to "obrar bien"; but, as we see in the play (if we did not know it already), that admirable objective can have consequences as catastrophic as any refusal to do so, whether on the grand scale (represented by Basilio), or on the level of the individual (represented by the Criado Segundo). On the other hand, the horoscope cast by Basilio

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culpabilidad al final de su famoso discurso crítico sobre los errores de su padre." op. cit., p. 73

[22] op. cit., p. 74.

has, as Dunn points out,[23] been fulfilled to the letter: Segismundo ought therefore to be a tyrant - if we believe that the horoscope is to be regarded as an astrological truth.

We are offered judgements on Segismundo by other characters in the play:

> BASILIO. Tu ingenio a todos admira.
> ASTOLFO. ¡Qué condición tan mudada!
> ROSAURA. ¡Qué discreto y qué prudente! (3302-4)

But how much weight can we give to these assessments? We have heard the word ingenio invoked more than once in the play: Basilio bragged about his own "ingenio" when he was explaining his scheme in Act I (v. 645), while Rosaura, too, likes to think of herself as exercising "ingenio" (vv. 1959, 2863). What about Astolfo's tribute to Segismundo's "condición tan mudada"? Astolfo (the play's model of vacillation and inconstancy) is amazed by Segismundo's transition from savage (dressed as prince) to prince (dressed as savage), while Segismundo, thus clad in skins, looks to us exactly as he did at the beginning. Rosaura compliments Segismundo's discretion and prudence, but (to quote T. E. May again), "¿tiene Rosaura autoridad para hacernos desatender conclusiones tan evidentes? Rosaura es más apasionada e impulsiva que prudente; le falta la flexibilidad del político."[24]

[23] op. cit., p. 194.

[24] op. cit., p. 74.

Prudence, anyway, is another of those concepts (like valor) of which we hear a lot but see, in the play, little practical evidence: for example, Clotaldo and Astolfo both agreed, when the battle was lost a short while earlier, that it was prudent for Basilio to continue to flee his responsibilities (vv. 3118-25), and Basilio himself had demanded prudence of Segismundo (vv. 808-9) when he had made it utterly impossible for the latter to have taken even the first step towards the acquisition of it.

Far from elucidating the appropriate nature of our judgement on Segismundo, these comments from Basilio, Astolfo and Rosaura do, if anything, confuse the issue still further, precisely because there could be some justification for their views: ingenio, for example, may, after all, be regarded as a part of prudence,[25] although it would be damning with faint praise if it were meant as such; Segismundo could be seen to have changed in some respects (fear now restrains him, whereas in the first day in the palace it did not); and, most interesting of all, he could be said to show a certain degree of

[25] cf. Juan Luis Vives, who divided prudentia into a combination of ingenium, memoria, iudicium and usus rerum (referred to by E. C. Riley, in Cervantes' Theory of the Novel [Oxford, 1964], pp. 58-9); hence my suggestion of damning with faint praise: Basilio, who had once hoped for prudentia from Segismundo, now sees only ingenium, nothing of memoria, iudicium or usus rerum.

discretion and prudence. If those conditions are acceptable, then the range of possible attitudes to his behaviour becomes even wider; I want to consider all these alternatives.

It seems, from what was said earlier, that Segismundo could be regarded either as a King or as a Tyrant, i.e., that the final judgements he makes could be seen as either rational or irrational. They may be seen as rational on the grounds, adduced by those who see in them a restoration of order, that moral law demands that promises be fulfilled, that civil disruption be punished, that enemies be treated with magnanimity, etc. Looking at the events in that way, we may feel that Segismundo is indeed setting about the business of restoring some semblance of morality to the mess in which he finds the social and political affairs of the country, and his decisions could certainly be defended on those grounds. They may, however, be seen as entirely irrational, for the reasons suggested above, viz., that Basilio and Clotaldo were traitors, and that, if the soldier was a traitor, so too is Segismundo; this irrationality may be implicit in the phrase Segismundo uses to justify his imprisonment of the soldier, for while "el traidor no es menester,/ siendo la traición pasada" sounds like a reasonable principle in the abstract, as a general truth, in the particular it can be nothing more than a clever little aphorism designed to whitewash the expediency of a

tyrant. Tyrants are, we must agree, adept at finding general truths to cloak particular injustices, although, in this case, that would imply a conscious cunning on Segismundo's part, which we might prefer to discount on the assumption that it is yet another of the clichés Segismundo learned from Clotaldo, and by which he himself is convinced; alternatively, we might feel that there is a conscious cunning involved, reflected in Segismundo's conciliatory attitude towards Clotaldo: what more sensible for a tyrant to do, than select ministers whom he knows to be loyal to tyranny?

This last point, about Segismundo's conscious cunning, leads us to the extra difficulties I mentioned, which arise if there is any truth at all in the three apparently satisfied judgements we hear in vv. 3302-4, for there exists the possibility that Segismundo's actions should be construed as prudent in that they avoid a greater evil, by giving clear warning that he will not tolerate further social and political disorder; however, if that desired effect is not achieved, and further unrest follows from his decisions, said decisions will have been proved imprudent. The problem is, that although the rational course and the prudent course ought to converge, it can be seen that they are not necessarily compatible. So Segismundo's arrangements may be seen as either a) rational, in that he restores a moral order, or b) irrational, in that

he ignores the moral ramifications of his decisions and is confused by catchphrases, or c) rational but imprudent, in that he tries to restore a moral order but only succeeds in causing further chaos, or d) irrational but prudent, in that he temporarily sets morality aside in order to bring about a more lasting stability (strictly speaking, a false prudence, but resorting to fine distinctions does not dispose of the problem). Is Segismundo a clever King, a stupid Tyrant, a stupid King, or a clever Tyrant, respectively?

For the spectator, the difficulty is not in trying to work out what will happen to non-existent dramatic characters; the spectator's difficulty consists in the very fact that Segismundo's decisions can be interpreted in so many different ways, and that the same words convey all the various possibilities. That has important implications for the liberty of the spectator. An underlying irony, apparent throughout the play, is that Calderón's use of the theme of astrology offers the spectator the opportunity of choosing between regarding the plot as a lesson in human responsibility, and regarding it as illustrative of the power of forces beyond man's control (in this case, the stars). If he chooses to accept the influence of the stars, then of course he necessarily renounces his liberty. If he sees the events depicted as consequences of human decision and behaviour, then he will realise that,

in the last scene especially, he is being invited to use his reason and choice, i.e., to exercise his natural liberty; at that point he finds that he cannot do so with any hope of a definite conclusion. By virtue of our possession of reason and choice, we pride ourselves on being superior to the beasts, but we are here forced to admit that, in practise, this natural liberty can become obscured; meanwhile, Segismundo, the man whose decisions we cannot analyse conclusively, is dressed as a beast and admitting that he is governed by a dream and a passion. The joke, it seems, is on us.

In sum, discussion of the theme of liberty as reflected in this play must, in my judgement, take account of several interrelated factors. One, that Segismundo's reason, on which his natural liberty depends, has not been trained or enlightened to the degree necessary to make rational or prudent judgements about what is to be done, but bears all the marks of retardation that, from our knowledge of his background, we would expect. Two, that the law, which should offer guidance in matters where his own reason is inadequate (just as it should for other men, few of whom can claim perfectly-developed reasoning faculties), is, in Segismundo's case, an instrument of tyranny, a perversion; voluntary submission to Basilio's law would imply no liberty for Segismundo. Three, that he is largely dominated by his instincts - for worse in Acts I and

II, for better in Act III - and for much of the play is conditioned by a belief that life is a dream and thus irrational and inconsequential. Four, that as a result of all that, his ability to discriminate between a real good and a false good is very limited, so that his natural liberty is as circumscribed in its application as it is in its development. Finally, along with these fictional difficulties, real difficulties of judgement are being presented to the spectator, via the ironies and ambiguities of Calderón's mise-en-scène, which force him to admit, a) that his reason is fallible, and, because of the inadequacy of language, potentially misleading, even to the point of seeming to justify behaviour that is essentially passionate; b) that human law, while not necessarily as tyrannical as Basilio's, is nonetheless imperfect, and is obeyed as much through fear as through love of reason; and c) that he has the same difficulties in controlling his instincts and distinguishing true from false goods as does Segismundo. If Segismundo is to be seen, as he sometimes is, as a representative of all men, those problems would appear to comprise one aspect of the complete picture.

Chapter V

Cervantes' LA ILUSTRE FREGONA

Discussing Cervantes' La Ilustre Fregona, Professor A. A. Parker remarks: "... it seems certain that the attraction of freedom, of an unrestrained and anarchical existence, could in real life outweigh the comforts of a settled domestic existence"[1] and then, a little later,

> None the less, to explain the picaresque novel as arising solely from nostalgia for social freedom seems to me ultimately misguided because it disregards the context in which the theme of freedom invariably occurs in the literature of the period: the context is not that of approval, but of condemnation. All the praises of freedom referred to above ... are ironical. The Spaniards of 1600 knew very clearly how attractive an anarchical freedom can appear to be to the young, but they also knew, even more clearly, the difference between the responsible freedom that chooses discipline and the license that rejects it. For every instance in which the theme of freedom appears in the Spanish literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as praise of the natural life, there are ninety-nine in which it appears as a question of moral discipline.[2]

As must be clear from the evidence adduced in this thesis, Professor Parker's assessment of the official

[1] Literature and the Delinquent, Edinburgh, 1967, p. 16.

[2] op. cit., pp. 18-19.

seventeenth-century Spanish attitude to liberty, and its difference from license, is entirely accurate. In this chapter I propose to begin by demonstrating the way in which this assessment is apparent within the novela ejemplar he mentions, La Ilustre Fregona; I will then go on to examine the way in which Cervantes sets the logic of the theory against the vagaries of practise, and to attempt thereby to cast some light on the story, not just as an exemplification of the morality involved, but as an insight into the difficulties and apparent ambiguities of that morality; finally, to support my view of La Ilustre Fregona, I propose to offer a brief study of some associated problems as they appear in Rinconete y Cortadillo.[3]

1. La Ilustre Fregona.

Cervantes begins the tale of La Ilustre Fregona with a brief description of the picaresque life in general, and the tunneries at Zahara in particular. We are told that Carriazo,

[3]Lest my omission of any reference to them should arouse comment, there are two books I ought to mention here, viz. Sentido y Forma de las Novelas Ejemplares, by Joaquín Casalduero, (Buenos Aires, 1943), and Cervantes y la Libertad, by Luis Rosales, (Madrid, 1960). The former I do not find very useful; as for the latter, its content has no discernible bearing on the problems under discussion here, but disposes of the premises established in this thesis in its very first chapter by way of a distinction between libertad and libre albedrío which is, in my judgement, without foundation.

running away from home to become a tramp and a trickster, was "tan contento de la vida libre"[4] that he did not mind its discomforts; we are also told something of the nature of this "vida libre," and its moral characteristics are clearly stated:

> ¡Allí, allí, que está en su centro el trabajo junto con la poltronería! Allí está la suciedad limpia, la gordura rolliza, la hambre prompta, la hartura abundante, sin disfraz el vicio, el juego siempre, las pendencias por momentos, las muertes por puntos, las pullas a cada paso, los bailes como en bodas, las seguidillas como en estampa, los romances con estribos, la poesía sin acciones. Aquí se canta, allí se reniega, acullá se riñe, acá se juega, y por todo se hurta. (pp. 225-6)

Fun and games go hand in hand with theft and murder. The freedom of the "vida libre" is, as Parker says, the freedom from, or abdication of, social and moral duties, responsibility and discipline; it is the freedom to follow desires and impulses with no thought of consequences, so that, insofar as it is submission to instinct rather than reason, it is not liberty at all (either natural or, still less, moral), but a denial of it. When Cervantes goes on to say "Allí campea la libertad y luce el trabajo" (p. 226), he is being pointedly ambiguous: trabajo usually means "work", but the appropriate

[4] Novelas Ejemplares, ed. Marín, Madrid 1962 (Clásicos Castellanos), Vol. 1, p. 222. All subsequent references in this chapter, including both La Ilustre Fregona and Rinconete y Cortadillo, are to this edition.

meaning here is the *germanía*, "theft",[5] while *libertad*, which *ought* to imply responsibility and discipline, here refers - as it often does - only to license and anarchy.

The illusory nature of the latter freedom is pointed out in the following paragraph: "... toda esta dulzura que he pintado tiene un amargo acíbar que la amarga," (p. 227). The bitter pill is the prospect of being captured and enslaved by Moorish raiders, a prospect which ruins everybody's sleep. In the midst of "liberty", then, there is the permanent threat of slavery - not just a peripheral menace like fire or pestilence, but a danger which causes everyone to "no poder dormir sueño seguro sin el temor de que en un instante los trasladan de Zahara a Berbería", and necessitating the posting of guards who cannot, however, guarantee the safety of the sleepers. The word "temor" takes us to the core of the state of natural liberty: subjection to an instinct such as fear constitutes the destruction of human liberty, as I have had occasion to point out in previous chapters. Given the nature of the picaresque life, one can begin to appreciate the truism that the life of a slave could be more free than the life of a *pícaro*,

[5] Cf. "trabajar=hurtar", in Juan Hidalgo's *Bocabulario de Germanía*, on p. 317 of *Orígenes de la Lengua Española*, compuestos por varios autores, recogidos por Don Gregorio Mayáns i Siscár, Tomo 1, Madrid, 1737.

for a slave may still retain his natural liberty, that is, the power to choose the good in obeying the reason rather than the instincts, while a pícaro renounces this power.

Carriazo's avoidance of reason and obedience, and his subservience to instinct, is apparent all through the story, and is, visibly, directly connected to the life he led in the tunneries, and to his predilection for that life. He does not have the excuse of not knowing where the rational choice lies, nor of being unable to exercise it, for he was well brought up, apparently, and we are told that

> ... con serle anejo a este género de vida la miseria y estrecheza, mostraba Carriazo ser un príncipe en sus cosas: a tiro de escopeta, en mil señales, descubría ser bien nacido, porque era generoso y bien partido con sus camaradas. (pp. 223-4)

Even allowing for the irony underlying this and similar complimentary descriptions of Carriazo, the point is made that Carriazo is aware of proper (rational) standards, but, like many of us, succumbs to instinct when to do so appears attractive. Cervantes, via this comic irony I mentioned, draws attention to that in the lines which follow:

> Visitaba pocas veces las ermitas de Baco, y aunque bebía vino, era tan poco, que nunca pudo entrar en el número de los que llaman desgraciados, que con alguna cosa que beban demasiada, luego se les pone el rostro como si se le hubiesen jalbegado con bermellón y almagre (p. 224)

- he did not drink a lot, at least, not enough to get a

"boozer's nose"! This juxtaposition of the demands of the reason with those of the instincts, and Carriazo's rejection of the former, reappears in various guises throughout the story - for example, in the letter sent by Carriazo and Avendaño to their parents, (pp. 234-5): the lies they tell suggest what they might reasonably do, fight for God and King in Flanders, but, instead, they head for the godless anarchy of "gangland".

In the background of the story there is a constant illustration of the incompatible juxtaposition of the rational and irrational aspects of Carriazo's life. Carriazo is always half-way between two worlds: he wants to be a tramp, and so he dresses and behaves like one, but cannot slough off certain vestiges of his nobility - accent, bearing, lip-service to certain principles, and the other things which make him seem a "príncipe en sus cosas" - so that in the end he is recognisable as neither, but is only a rather hapless fake. When he and Avendaño arrive at the Posada del Sevillano, where they want to see Costanza, "... no se atrevieron a pedirla allí, porque su traje no lo pedía" (p. 240). The double use of pedir draws the reader's attention to the anomaly: although they are young nobles, and would have no difficulty in getting accommodation if they appeared as such, they do not appear as such, and the immediate result is Carriazo's exasperation,

because Avendaño is willing to hang about hoping to catch a glimpse of the girl. When they finally take a room at the Posada, they are given one "... que no era de caballeros ni de criados" (p. 243), although they claimed to be the latter and are in reality the former. A pointed joke is that it is La Argüello who gives them these rooms, and that she and La Gallega, both of them sluttish maids whom Carriazo understandably finds repulsive, have no faith in the veracity of the boys, and warn the innkeeper that the latter will not stay a minute longer than they want (pp. 254-5), which, as the reader knows, is quite correct.

The essential dishonesty of Carriazo's situation is that he is playing. He has money behind him, and one cannot be a genuine pícaro if one has wealth to fall back on; that Carriazo does not use his own money, but makes his living in the manner of a pícaro, with all its discomforts, cannot alter the fact that his life does not depend on his success as a pícaro, as it does for any genuine pícaro (in the latter's eyes, at least). The silly point about it is that any real pícaro (such as the Buscón) would give his eye-teeth to be like the real Carriazo. We may say, therefore, that the liberty Carriazo seeks and enjoys is doubly false: in the first place, it is an illusory liberty, and in the second, his relationship with it cannot be genuine.

The falsity of Carriazo's behaviour thus matches the falsity of the liberty he seeks, and the latter may be seen more clearly when we examine this liberty in the context of justice. The kind of justice which apparently prevails in Sevilla is discussed by the two mozos de mulas at the gate of Illescas (pp. 236-7): it is the callous and arbitrary justice of the Military Governor, the Conde de Puñonrostro, who will transgress any civil law which gets in the way of his determination to hang people, claiming military jurisdiction over them, without giving them the right of appeal. If the law is being twisted in this way - and the similarities with the situation in Calderón's El Alcalde de Zalamea should be obvious - it is not very useful to maintain that obedience to it comprises the operation of natural liberty (there are qualifications of that which will be mentioned later). However, if the civil law is a threat to liberty, much more so is the "justice" of the society in which Carriazo moves. When Carriazo is beaten up by his fellow water-carriers, it is an incident of mob violence which is scarcely justified by Carriazo's assault on the "aguador antiguo." There is a cry of "¡Justicia, justicia! ¡Que este aguador ha muerto a un hombre!" (p. 257), but the old man is not dead, and mob justice - by definition - does not include such elementary processes as finding witnesses or hearing the defence of the

accused, who was, to some extent, provoked.

Later, when Carriazo again offends the sensibilities of the vulgo and the underworld, in the episode of the ass's tail (pp. 290 ff.), there is a parody of a trial, in which the jurists analyse the situation:

> ... hubo letrados que fueron de parecer que no tenía razón en lo que pedía ... (p. 290)

while Carriazo cites precedents for his defence:

> ... replicó Lope que los carneros de Berbería ordinariamente tienen cinco cuartos, y que el quinto es de la cola, y cuando los tales carneros se cuartean, tanto vale la cola como cualquier cuarto (p. 291)

and rebuts the charges against him with some neat legalistic phraseology:

> ... y que a lo de ir la cola junto con la res que se vende viva y no se cuartea, que lo concedía; pero que la suya no fué vendida, sino jugada, y que nunca su intención fué jugar la cola, y que al punto se lo volviesen luego con todo lo a ella anejo y concerniente, que era desde la punta del cerebro, con toda la osamenta del espinazo, donde ella tomaba principio y descendía, hasta parar en los últimos pelos della. (p. 291)

It is, of course, ludicrous, and Carriazo has to support his "arguments" with the point of a knife:

> ... voleó allí el capelo y empuñó un puñal que debajo del capotillo traía, y púsose en tal postura, que infundió temor y respecto en toda aquella aguadora compañía. (p. 292)

Finally, a "judge" intervenes and arranges a compromise:

> Finalmente, uno dellos, que parecía de más razón

> y discurso, los concertó en que se echase la cola contra un cuarto del asno a una quínola, o a dos y pasante. (pp. 292-3)

The result is that Carriazo regains the advantage financially, makes restitution, and - Cervantes' final detail of the legal processes he is satirising - pays off the assembled jury and witnesses:

> ... le levantó y le volvió todo el dinero que le había ganado, y los diez y seis ducados del asno, y aun de los que él tenía repartió con los circunstantes ... (p. 293)

Afterwards, deed, trial, and outcome are made public, and the vulgo forms its opinions.

Such is the nature of picaresque justice, of which picaresque liberty is a complement. It depends upon the turn of a word or phrase ("solamente había jugado los cuatro cuartos del asno," etc.), the point of a knife, or the instincts of the mob. Obviously, obedience to that kind of law bears no resemblance to the submission to reason which real liberty requires. That is easy to say on a theoretical plane, but, with the Conde de Puñonrostro in mind, the reader may well feel that this picaresque justice is not entirely different from the kind of justice dispensed in a real court of law; he might also notice that amongst the roughnecks there is, at least, a desire to punish the guilty, whereas, on the two occasions when Carriazo is in the hands of official civil

justice, money and influence secure his release.

For the moment, however, I am concerned with the formal morality of the story, to see what the consequences are of choosing the illusory liberty of the picaresque life. Since Carriazo had left home "... sin forzarle a ello algún mal tratamiento que sus padres le hiciesen" (p. 221), and apparently had not sent word home for three years, he has to make great efforts to present himself to his family as "honrado y contento" (p. 228), and to tell them "mil magníficas y luengas mentiras" (p. 229) to account for his lengthy absence. Cervantes seems to throw all that into comic relief at the end of the story, when Carriazo's father, finding the scruffy and bloodied Carriazo at the Posada, asks in exasperation, "¿Aun no se te han olvidado tus picardías?" (p. 319), from which we may perhaps infer that Carriazo's father had always had a shrewd idea of the activities which Carriazo goes to such lengths to conceal; in view of Carriazo Senior's own past, that would not be hard to believe.

For Carriazo, anyway, those filial lies and deceits are the beginning of the process of his subjection to the consequences of his picaresque "liberty": having succumbed to instinct in the first place, in going to the tunneries "sólo por su gusto y antojo" (p. 222), subsequent choices and actions are conditioned by that fact in itself, and, more important,

by its effect on his character. An immediate example is that the proper activities of a young nobleman, "la caza" and "los muchos, honestos y gustosos convites" (p. 229), hold no interest for him because his judgement and tastes have been warped by the anarchy of the tunneries. The addiction to the tunneries, the lies which conceal it, and the lies with which he depicts it in order to induce Avendaño to aid him, are to lead, in the end, to the pain and humiliation he suffers within the time of the story. The falsity of the liberty with which he tempts Avendaño may be inferred from the way they behave as they begin to put their plans into effect: "Mostráronse los hijos humildes y obedientes;" (p. 231) - liberty is characterised by voluntary obedience to just law, and the two fathers seem to treat the two boys well enough; but Carriazo and Avendaño only pretend to obey them.

Proceeding to an examination of the way in which Carriazo's false liberty affects his character by reducing his capacity to behave according to the dictates of reason, and by inducing in him an increasing susceptibility to the whims of his instincts, we find that Carriazo constantly meets pain and misfortune, not on the naïve level of simple retribution, but on the basis of cause and effect. The process is exemplified when Carriazo gets into trouble in his first day as an aguador (pp. 256-9). To begin with, the

events concerned all go back to Carriazo's relationships with the tunneries and with Avendaño: were it not for his inclinations toward the vida picaresca, he would not be in Toledo now; had he not taken advantage of Avendaño's friendship to return to the tunneries, he would not now be hampered by Avendaño; and when he knocks over the old man, it is because his thoughts are "... puestos ... en sus almadrabas y en la súbita mutación de su estado" (p. 256), while his immediate reaction to the old man's understandable fury is to knock him unconscious. Cervantes' pun on caballero - "que aun se estaba caballero" (p. 257) - draws our attention to what has happened to Carriazo: a boy brought up to be a gentleman manifests all the savage instincts of a thug. The eventual outcome is logical enough: the alguacil - the representative of law - arrests Carriazo, and the latter is physically imprisoned. His release is due, not to the law's finding him innocent, but to the chain of corruption and bribery available to his friend (pp. 259-60), who greases palms with the kind of money that real pícaros presumably do not have.

In Carriazo's next conflict with the society that surrounds him, the causal connections between his picaresque instincts and attitudes, and his previous unsavoury existence, are plain. It begins with his quest for another ass - necessary because his first animal was confiscated after the fight

with the old man - and we observe the instincts which dominate him as he is tempted into a game of cards, refuses to lose, and resorts to trickery and the threat of violence to recover his property. That is the behaviour of a pícaro; worse, it is the behaviour of a "mug". One cannot imagine a Rinconete falling for the trap into which Carriazo falls when he accepts the invitation to play, and to which he was led by the mozo who enticed him to the Huerta del Rey with his story of a "super-ass": "Creyóle el Asturiano ..." (p. 288) writes Cervantes, and it is difficult not to infer that the emphasis on believing the mozo means that Carriazo is being tricked. Like the blustering harriero whom Rinconete and Cortadillo dupe at the beginning of their story (pp. 143-5), and whose "inhabilidad y simpleza" is remarked by his comrades, Carriazo's reasoning powers do not even stretch to the elementary caution necessary in his own picaresque world. Although he wins back his ass, thanks to the chicanery already mentioned, he gains another physical reminder of his condition in the jeering horde of urchins who follow him everywhere, yelling "¡Daca la cola!" - and even when the story ends, twenty years later, he is still subject to the fear of hearing that humiliating cry, even though his reason ought to persuade him of its unlikelihood.

The immediate result of his behaviour in the cola

incident is that

> No quedó taberna, ni bodegón, ni junta de pícaros donde no se supiese el juego del asno, el esquite por la cola, y el brío y la liberalidad del Asturiano; pero como la mala bestia del vulgo, por la mayor parte, es mala, maldita y maldiciente, no tomó de memoria la liberalidad, brío y buenas partes del gran Lope, sino solamente la cola. (p. 294)

The vulgo is described as a mala bestia - an animal without reason, whose instincts Cervantes describes; but for years Carriazo's ideal has been to consort with, and behave like, this mala bestia, and he has learned its instincts well. Indeed, his current predicament is directly attributable to his past vulgarity, so it is he who has let himself in for this humiliation.

The logic of the causal connections between Carriazo's past and present, his psychological and physical states, seems clear; certainly, he can do nothing about it - his "mucho silencio" (p. 294) and "paciencia" (p. 295) cannot undo his actions, and once more there is a logical outcome:

> Finalmente, tuvo por bien de retirarse a una posada que había tomado fuera de la de su compañero, por huir de la Argüello, y de estarse en ella hasta que la influencia de aquel mal planeta pasase, y se borrase de la memoria de los muchachos aquella demanda mala de la cola que le pedían. (p. 295)

As a consequence of his behaviour (not of any "mal planeta"), he now has to shut himself away, to undergo a self-imposed imprisonment - a physical metaphor of his psychological condition

- and "Seis días se pasaron sin que saliese de casa, si no era de noche ..."

When he does finally venture forth again, nothing has changed, and the inexorable chain of cause and effect shackles him once more, as we learn on p. 319. The urchins are still yelling "¡Daca la cola!" Carriazo has lost his temper and beaten one of them, then resisted arrest and been beaten himself. Once again, violent instinct has overwhelmed whatever reason he may be said to possess. The law has placed him under arrest, and the result of everything is utter humiliation - morally, physically, and socially - as he is confronted by his "deceived" father. Again, the physical and social discomfiture proves only temporary as the story closes, even though, as long as he remained in Toledo, "no faltaba quien, en el medio de la pompa, cuando iba por la calle, no le pidiese la cola," (p. 323); but the constant <u>fear</u> of the taunt, as already stated, means that Carriazo's natural liberty is impaired even twenty years later, when the fear may be compounded by his having three sons purporting to do exactly what he was purporting to do, "estudiando en Salamanca" (p. 323).

The moral thesis seems clear. Choosing the false liberty of the tunneries, Carriazo began the process of circumscribing his natural liberty. At the tunneries, where

reason must succumb to instinct if one is to survive - certainly if one is to enjoy it - natural liberty has no place: reason, obedience to law, choice of the good, all these things which are constituent parts of natural liberty are the antithesis of the nature of the picaresque existence. Rejecting that which separates man from beast, Carriazo becomes bestial, in the real sense of the word, that is, as a creature governed solely by instinct, with no capacity to choose that which is proper; in the story, we see the inexorable descent into savagery and humiliation occasioned by all that. The way Carriazo learned to behave in the tunneries conditions his behaviour throughout the story, and the story suggests that the conditioning lasts for much of his life; he has exchanged his natural liberty for an illusory liberty, and the struggle for moral liberty cannot even begin. Indeed, his moral condition is reflected in a more physical sense, by the dirty and lascivious maids, La Argüello and La Gallega, who represent the abandonment of any moral discipline for the sake of immediate gratification, with all that that involves in the way of duplicity and humiliation. Theirs is a complete submission to instinct, and, as such, a parallel of Carriazo's behaviour; but Carriazo regards them as being worse than animals, cf. p. 278:

-Mirad, Tomás; ponedme vos a pelear con dos gigantes,

> y en ocasión que me sea forzoso desquijarar por vuestro servicio media docena, o una, de leones; que yo lo haré con más facilidad que beber una taza de vino; pero que me pongáis en necesidad que me tome a brazo partido con la Argüello, no lo consentiré si me asaetean.

This morality is all very well when viewed in isolation, detached from both the rest of the story and from experience of real life, but there are aspects of the work which seem to apprise us of the dangers of seeing it only as a moral syllogism. One hint that we should be wary of moral didacticism is offered by Cervantes early in the tale. On p. 231 we read that

> Los padres dieron documentos a sus hijos de lo que habían de hacer, y de cómo se habían de gobernar para salir aprovechados en la virtud y en las ciencias, que es el fruto que todo estudiante debe pretender sacar de sus trabajos y vigilias, principalmente los bien nacidos.

Whether or not virtue is to be learned from study or reading is itself debatable - Avendaño has already put in three years at the university, but acquiesces in Carriazo's shady schemes without the slightest demur! - but the trap for the reader has already been set: throughout the first three paragraphs of the story, Cervantes had pointedly referred to the picaresque life in terms of formal education, thus:

> Finalmente, él salió tan bien con el asumpto de pícaro, que pudiera leer cátedra en la facultad al famoso de Alfarache. (p. 222)

> Pasó por todos los grados de pícaro, hasta que

> se graduó de maestro en las almadrabas de Zahara, donde es el finibusterrae de la picaresca. (pp. 224-5)
>
> Bajad el toldo, amainad el brío, no os llaméis pícaros si no habéis cursado dos cursos en la academia de la pesca de los atunes. (p. 225)

The reader thus arrives at the dubious remark about learning virtue from university study with the knowledge that he is reading about a university of vice! If the reader finishes this story of picaresque vicissitudes, it must be because he does not want morality so much as he wants fun; the reader is thus put quite firmly in his place, a place which is rather like that of the readers of those newspapers which concentrate on the more salacious items of news while maintaining that these are "cautionary tales." Cervantes, laughing up his sleeve, acidly inserts the idea that those who ought to derive virtue and knowledge from their studies are "principalmente los bien nacidos"; so far, all that the reader has learned about "los bien nacidos" is that "allí (Zahara) van, o envían, muchos padres principales a buscar a sus hijos, y los hallan" (pp. 226-7).

This mockery of the reader's possible moral presumption is apparent in other ways, particularly in the presentation of the two Carriazos, father and son. Cervantes habitually invites the moral approval of the reader for Carriazo's character or behaviour, only to confront the reader with the

realisation that his moral principles are really rather tawdry. Consider again the paragraph that begins at the foot of p. 222 ("En tres años ..."), and ends at the top of p. 225. It begins and ends with assertions that Carriazo, in spite of his picaresque existence, cannot help being a jolly good chap:

> ... descubría ser bien nacido, porque era generoso y bien partido con sus camaradas. (p. 224)

> En fin, en Carriazo vió el mundo un pícaro virtuoso, limpio, bien criado, y más que medianamente discreto. (p. 224)

But, in between the roses, the thorns:

> Visitaba pocas veces las ermitas de Baco, y aunque bebía vino, era tan poco, que nunca pudo entrar en el número de los que llaman desgraciados ... (p. 224)

Every word is loaded, and the paradoxes ought to alert us to the dangers ("pícaro virtuoso" etc.). Cervantes is playing on the likelihood of his reader being like most of us, in that he will share the belief that fooling around (i.e., sin) is harmless enough as long as you don't do it too often; he will therefore be pleasantly flattered by the support for this attitude implied in Carriazo's virtue, hygiene, good breeding and discretion. But the extent of Carriazo's moderation is only that he did not become an alcoholic! Furthermore, if the reader accepts uncritically the glossy epithets regarding Carriazo's demeanour, he is sharing the opinion of "el mundo": very reassuring, but what kind of <u>mundo</u> is it that esteems

Carriazo so highly? It can only be the mundo picaresco - naturally, they think a lot of him, after all he is "generoso y bien partido con sus camaradas." So what kind of virtue, gentility, etc. is it to which the reader is probably giving his assent? And if he does not give his assent, why has he allowed himself to be drawn into the mundo picaresco by reading the story?

Cervantes' presentation of Carriazo Senior is equally sardonic, as he tempts the reader to accept Don Diego's account of the rape of Costanza's mother (pp. 316-7). That kind of story would be tedious enough in bit-of-a-lad-y'know saloon-bar bragging; when it is implied that the deed was hardly even the offender's responsibility, we have to be careful about how much we are going to swallow. The whole sorry business is made to depend upon the introductory "Ordenó la suerte ...", alternatively expressed a few moments later as "el silencio, la soledad, la ocasión ...". The reader may not be a rapist, but, again, if he is like most people, he has at some time or another found it convenient to disclaim responsibility for his situation or behaviour by attributing it to luck or fate or what-have-you, in which case he is quite likely to be willing to sympathise with Don Diego's similar attitude. Moreover, reverting to the matter in hand, if grown men do talk like this, what on earth is the point of writing morally

didactic stories? The story is not just putting the waywardness of youth before us: this is a middle-aged man whose rhetoric is held up to our gaze.

The last point seems important, for it is a corollary of the fact that Cervantes appears to have a shrewd idea that his reader does not really want fictional lessons in moral logic, and that he is unlikely to be much affected by them if he gets them.[6] The significance of the corollary is that the behaviour of Carriazo and company is so utterly ordinary. The representative nature of Carriazo's behaviour may be seen when we consider him in conjunction with the preceding generation, with his own generation, and with Avendaño. That Carriazo's behaviour is similar in kind to his father's may be inferred from the paragraph above, and it is an inference which becomes unavoidable at the end of the story, when

[6] It seems to me possible to argue that, as a moral lesson, the story is inconsistent: although Carriazo is seen to suffer as a consequence of his behaviour, Avendaño is not, nor is Carriazo's father; on the other hand, Carriazo's mother and stepmother, both relatively innocent, are seen to suffer, while Costanza herself, a paragon of virtue, seems to have no say at all in the conditions of her life. Of course, it is possible to argue the other way, saying that, since Carriazo does suffer, Cervantes has left it to us to assume that the other guilty parties do likewise, especially as it is generally believed that while sin does not necessarily damage a man in worldly terms, it certainly does spiritually; but if the reader sees and understands all that, surely he scarcely needs Cervantes to remind him of it in the first place?

Cervantes brings them face-to-face in a manner that is historically surprising, but poetically truthful, for both of them arrive at that point in time and space as a direct consequence of their own previous behaviour. The common ground Carriazo shares with many of his contemporaries may be seen in Cervantes' biting remark that "allí van, o envían, muchos padres principales a buscar a sus hijos, y los hallan" (p. 226), which, incidentally, tells us a little about the fathers, too. Other pillars of society, such as the Church and the judiciary, are, in their own way, no better, as is demonstrated by the innkeeper's scheme to arrange for Carriazo's release from prison (p. 260); while the vulgo are neither any better nor any worse.

Avendaño's position as an indicator of the way we should view Carriazo's behaviour is more prominent, and consists in his own commonplace experience being bracketed with Carriazo's career. I say commonplace, because, right from the first mention of Costanza, Avendaño is shown as another of the herd of people who ogle her: like the mozo de mulas at Illescas, like the latter's friends, like the Corregidor's son, like the rest of the crowds that come and go at the Posada, Avendaño is smitten by Costanza's looks, and Cervantes describes his condition with an accuracy to which anyone who has reached the age of twenty will testify. Nothing could be

more natural, inevitable, and everyday, than Avendaño's immediate passion for Costanza, his pretence that it is "platonic", his gnawing jealousy, even his physical reactions, from blushing face to quaking knees. The sheer banality of Avendaño's adolescent intensity would be worthy of any Teenage Love Story, were it not for the comedy with which Cervantes surrounds these sticky little passions: Avendaño's spending twenty-four days trying to get near to Costanza, a feat finally accomplished only when she develops toothache; his silly (and, in one respect, untruthful) letter, in which he claims to be an heir, which is rejected by Costanza, understandably, since he also claims to be a pícaro; his eventual terror at the arrival of his father, aptly ridiculed by the Corregidor: "-Baje vuesa merced, señor pariente; que aquí no le aguardan osos ni leones" (p. 320); these little details all help us to keep Avendaño in perspective.

There is little here to arouse moral indignation, and Cervantes seems at pains to show both Avendaño's and Carriazo's behaviour on this same level of normality. Immediately after the conversation between the two mozos de mulas at Illescas, the respective choices of the two boys are encompassed within one paragraph (p. 239): Avendaño wants to see a girl, Carriazo wants to see his tunneries. A few pages later, the two mock each other's desires (p. 245), Avendaño remarking

that, if a passion for a fregona ill befits a noble, still less does it become a noble to nurture a passion for the almadraba de Zahara. On p. 250, Cervantes says that Costanza "... a Carriazo le pareció tan bien como a su compañero, pero enamoróle mucho menos"; that both respond differently to the same girl may serve to remind us that passion is not, by definition, rational or logical, and that, in that sense, there is little difference between adolescent passion for a girl, and adolescent passion for picaresque excitement.

It could be argued that the reader is meant to contrast the two passions, seeing Avendaño's as legitimate and Carriazo's as illegitimate, especially as Carriazo is shown to suffer permanent psychological discomfiture, while Avendaño lives "happily ever after". But ambiguity surrounds that kind of schematising: on one side, Carriazo's fear of hearing "Daca la cola" seems, by comparison with the risks he ran of death, slavery and imprisonment, a small price to pay for three years' fooling around, and thus scarcely convincing as a condemnation of an "illegitimate" passion; on the other side, if the fact that he does pay a price is to be taken to prove something, it can, by extension, easily be taken as a hint that Avendaño's domesticity is not so blissful as is supposed. So, Carriazo's condition may be seen as either (relatively) happy or(relatively) miserable, but neither case

is necessarily a contrast with Avendaño's condition. I think it is useful, in this case, to bear in mind Parker's remark that "The Spaniards of 1600 knew very clearly how attractive an anarchical freedom can appear to be to the young," and to regard both Carriazo and Avendaño as ordinary rather than villainous. However legitimate or illegitimate these youthful passions may be, the truth behind both is seen by Cervantes as comic: just as Avendaño's passion does not work out as he might have hoped (until the very end, when his wishes are fulfilled, not _via_ any effort of his, but solely as a result of the unhappy events which took place many years before), so, beneath the surface excitement of the "vida libre", we have Carriazo eventually driven into hiding by tarts and urchins.

Where does all that leave us, and what has it to do with liberty? On the one hand, we have a demonstration of the moral law in action, on the other, the implication that, although we recognise this law, we gladly and unregretfully break it quite regularly. That we behave in this silly fashion is indisputable, and Cervantes is not concerned with merely showing us that. As a writer, it is not surprising that his interest in the problem concerns the role of _words_, which brings us back - as it has before, in preceding chapters - to the foundation of natural liberty, human reason. Part of the problem derives from our tendency to assume that

there is a real (as distinct from a conveniently artificial) connection between a word and its referent, and it is well-known that in Cervantes' time the connection was believed to have a metaphysical basis.[7] That seems to bestow upon words a certain power, and we can see in Cervantes' fiction that that power has a lot to do with the problems attendant upon seeing what natural liberty means in practice.

The plot of the story culminates in the solution of the word-puzzle, "ÉSTA ES LA SEÑAL VERDADERA" (pp. 315-6), and it seems to be a hint that Cervantes has been confronting us with the problem of words throughout the tale. On p. 229 he remarks, "Es de advertir que en su peregrinación don Diego mudó el nombre de Carriazo en el de Urdiales, y con este nombre se hizo llamar de los que el suyo no sabían." The reader is admonished to notice that Carriazo changed his name. Why this stricture? The name Urdiales never occurs again in the story, and to that extent is an irrelevance. But it is relevant, in another way, to the picture Cervantes is putting before us: changing names is not going to change reality, and disguising his noble lineage does not make Carriazo any the less a noble

[7] cf. Fray Luis: "Y assí ... que el nombre es como imagen de la cosa de quien se dize, o la misma cosa disfraçada en otra manera, que sustituye por ella y se toma por ella ..." De Los Nombres de Cristo, Ed. Onís, 3 vols., "Clásicos Castellanos", (Madrid, 1914-22), tomo 1, pp. 30-31.

or any the more a pícaro - he is still only a "borrador de pícaro" (p. 228). "Es de advertir ..." is no idle comment from Cervantes, for the changing of names becomes a motif running through the whole story, to the extent that, as the story progresses, the author insidiously uses the pseudonym "Lope Asturiano" as if that were Carriazo's real name. As readers, we have to consider the implications of this name-changing, and the important implication is not, that proper names can be discarded and rearranged, but that, by accident or design, names themselves - i.e., words - can be used or abused in the same way, with the result that the reality, or truth, to which they are meant to refer, can be distorted or disguised. When words, the vehicles of reason, do that, reason is betrayed and natural liberty jeopardised.

To refer to the danger of distorting the truth via distorted language may be to state the obvious, but Cervantes feels it is worth implying more than once in the story. Carriazo's father is guilty of such distortion when he suggests that rape was a consequence of "la suerte"; so is the hotelier when he uses the agreeable metaphor of "ungüento para untar a todos los ministros de la justicia" (p. 261) as a euphemism for what is, in reality, bribery and corruption. So too is Avendaño, when he proclaims his passion for Costanza in terms such as these: "¿qué puedo yo hacer, si me parece que el

destino con oculta fuerza me inclina, y la elección con claro discurso me mueve a que la adore?" (p. 265) - another persuasive cliché, the application of which is questionable: Avendaño's destino so far has been Carriazo, and the idea of passion being so easily reconciled with "elección con claro discurso" is itself suspect. But those are the kind of grandiose expressions we tend to use to dignify our very ordinary feelings. Carriazo, rightly, mocks these pretentious commonplaces:

> -... ¡Oh felicísimos tiempos los nuestros, donde vemos que la belleza enamora sin malicia, la honestidad enciende sin que abrase, el donaire da gusto sin que incite, y la bajeza del estado humilde obliga y fuerza a que le suban sobre la rueda de la que llaman Fortuna! (pp. 265-6)

he, however, has already been hoist by his own petard (cf. p. 245, where Avendaño mocks his "love" for the tunneries).

The deceptive nature of words is made more explicit in the passage on pp. 280-283, involving the huésped and his wife. The keynote of the passage is provided in the bickering between the huésped and his wife with which their conversation opens, she reacting to his gibe ("... como sois poeta, luego daréis en su sentencia" [p. 280]) by bragging about her command of Latin: "... ya sabéis vos que tengo buen entendimiento, y que sé rezar en latín las cuatro oraciones." The huésped tells her, "-Mejor haríades de rezallas en romance; que ya os

dijo vuestro tío el clérigo que decíades mil gazafatones cuando rezábades en latín, y que no rezábades nada" - her words, he says, are meaningless. But does that make her prayers meaningless, if she knows what they are about? Surely not - after all, Monipodio's malapropisms are "meaningless", but he knows what he means, and so do his listeners. A bigger danger visible in the huéspeda's remark is that she thinks that her Latin prayers are a sign of her "buen entendimiento" - a silly belief in itself, and one which, from a religious point of view, may do more, by its conceit, to invalidate her prayers than the meaninglessness of the words she utters.

The huéspeda, meanwhile, attributes the slur on her Latin to the envious gossip of the priest's niece: "-Esa flecha, de la aljaba de su sobrina ha salido; que está envidiosa de verme tomar las horas de latín en la mano, y irme por ellas como por viña vendimiada" (p. 281). Maybe, but that does not, in itself, invalidate the charge, for gossip is not always mendacious: the gossip of the vulgo eventually drives Carriazo to desperation, and it has a point, for Carriazo - unlike Costanza's mother, who at the time of parturition was on the way to Guadalupe, "Por huir de los maliciosos ojos de mi tierra ..." (p. 303) - is not innocent, although, on the other hand, the Greek-meets-Greek flavour

of the whole incident means that the vulgo are scarcely justified in passing adverse judgement on Carriazo's behaviour (etc., etc.). The reader, trying to decide where the truth lies, is unable to pin it down: the words dissolve into ambiguities, and the ambiguities split into further ambiguities, like a scholastic disputation. Meanwhile, the argument is, in the first place, dependent on a quarrel between husband and wife - hardly a situation in which a truthful remark will be elicited.

Duly warned, then, the reader is confronted with the discussion between the two concerning Avendaño's poem in praise of Costanza, which the huésped has discovered in the accounts book. After reading the poem, the huéspeda pronounces judgement:

> -Mirad, marido - dijo la huéspeda: a lo que yo veo, puesto que las coplas nombran a Costancica, por donde se puede pensar que se hicieron para ella, no por eso lo habemos de afirmar nosotros por verdad como si se las viéramos escribir; cuanto más que otras Costanzas que la nuestra hay en el mundo; pero ya que sea por ésta, ahí no le dice nada que la deshonre, ni la pide cosa que le importe. (p. 283)

She says that they cannot take it for granted that the poem refers to their Costanza - the name is not conclusive - nor that there is any malicious intent behind the poem. True enough, but the huésped is not convinced: "-¿No sería mejor -dijo el marido- quitarnos desos cuidados y echarle de casa?"

For him, what was not said is more important than what was said. Cervantes is putting before us here two different ways of looking at the truth: the huéspeda will not assume guilt because she did not see the deed, and will not assume malice because it is not verbally explicit; the huésped will assume both guilt and malice notwithstanding. Which attitude will the reader choose? The former is probably the intellectual, or legalistic, attitude, but stated by someone who claims "buen entendimiento" because she mumbles pig-latin prayers; the latter is the common-sense attitude, which the reader knows to be well-founded (Avendaño is "enamorado de Costancica," and did write the verses with her in mind), but which also has, in theory, staggering implications for human language, for all that depends thereon (such as law and justice), and, not least, for the story and its reader, if the latter agrees that what is unsaid weighs as much as what is said.

In the end, Cervantes' joke: all the arguments are put into perspective as reality intervenes. Words or no words, no action is to be taken against Avendaño. Why? Because he is the best accountant the innkeeper can find! And on that, they both agree! They also agree to keep an eye on Avendaño, but the very next thing we read about is Avendaño's first advance to Costanza, which goes unnoticed by the huésped and his wife. Even then, Cervantes does not change the subject:

Avendaño tells lies in order to confess the truth. He offers a toothache cure, but makes a proposal of marriage, and the proposal itself contains lies ("A la fama de vuestra hermosura ... dejé mi patria, mudé vestido, etc." [p. 285]) which he swears are true ("... mirad qué pruebas queréis que haga para enteraros desta verdad").

It seems, therefore, that the story is very much concerned with, among other things, the relationships between truth and language. The very title of the story suggests the ambiguities and contradictions involved: La Ilustre Fregona - contradictory as it stands, and later shown to refer to a "fregona que no friega" (her only job is to keep the keys to the silver, v. p. 299). Carriazo's naïve question, "¿Cómo la llaman por toda la ciudad ... la fregona ilustre, si es que no friega?" (p. 263), deserves a better answer than the one he himself supplies ("... debe de ser que como friega plata, y no la loza, la dan el nombre de ilustre"); a better answer would involve questioning the perception of reality of those who gave her the name. Carriazo ought to know something about the power of words to distort reality, for it is he who employs such power to win back his ass, via the verbal device of the cola. The word cola later becomes Carriazo's albatross, and of itself demonstrates the problem under discussion: a distortion of reality in the first place, it brings about - to a

greater or lesser degree - the hobbling of Carriazo's natural liberty through his fear of hearing it again, and remains a representation of distorted reality in that Carriazo's hearing it again is so unlikely.

The most important aspect of the story, though, is that it is not just fictional characters who are confronted with, and indulge in, such ambiguities and distortions: the reader is put in the same position, and must choose his attitude. Early in the story, Cervantes warns us of that in an episode which is, I think, worth examining in some detail.

To an observer, the picaresque life can offer at least two very different faces, and, if objectivity is lacking in the beholder, the face seen will depend on his eye, as Cervantes reminds us on p. 228: "... todos sus deseos entregó (Carriazo) a aquellas secas arenas, que a él le parecían más frescas y verdes que los campos Elíseos." On p. 230, Carriazo lets Avendaño in on the secret of his passion for the tunneries, and tells him allabout "la vida de la jábega": "pintósela de modo, que Avendaño, cuando le acabó de oír, antes alabó que vituperó su gusto. En fin, él de la plática fué disponer Carriazo la voluntad de Avendaño de manera, que determinó de irse con él a gozar un verano de aquella felicísima vida que le había descrito ..." The choice of attitude which an observer can make is implicit in the expression "antes alabó que

vituperó su gusto": apparently, there are two mutually opposing facets of the picaresque life to be seen. Of the two, Avendaño, inexperienced in such matters, only sees one. Why? Because Carriazo "pintósela de modo que ...": Carriazo's words, and the way they describe life in the tunneries, are enough to convince Avendaño that it is worth abandoning home, family and studies in order to have fun with Carriazo down in Zahara. The point about language is plain enough within the fiction, but the reader might also consider the fact that, like Avendaño, he too is on the receiving end of a tale, one created by Cervantes. If Carriazo can arrange his information in this way, to "disponer la voluntad" of Avendaño, so too can his creator, Cervantes, to "disponer la voluntad" of the reader, and "lessons" in the story can only be reflections of Cervantes' manipulation of his material; but the reader is unlike Avendaño, who is merely the author's puppet, in that he may decide for himself how the material offered is to be interpreted and judged, and, indeed, on occasions, he is forced to decide. We can see this process at work in the quoted context: when Cervantes says, "En fin, él de la plática fué disponer Carriazo la voluntad de Avendaño ...", his pun is drawing attention to two different meanings of the word fin, which, in the phrase "él de la plática," can mean either "result" or "purpose". If "fin" is taken to mean "result", then Carriazo's story may

be seen as unintentional propaganda; but if "fin" is taken to mean "purpose", Carriazo is guilty of an unpleasant kind of incitement. The overtones of that ambiguity are startling: on the interpretation of one word may hinge the guilt or innocence of Carriazo's motives for telling Avendaño about Zahara, and, whichever way he chooses to interpret the word, the reader will be making a judgement on Carriazo, and, ultimately, on himself.

The reader must, accordingly, be careful in the attitude he takes to Cervantes' words: if he is not, he reduces himself to the level of Barabbás, the noisy mozo de mulas at the Posada, who takes umbrage when he misunderstands a single word ("contrapas", [p. 269]), thus changing the whole tone of the occasion, and who then hurls abuse at the unknown musician because he is unable to understand the banal imagery of the serenade. It is therefore incumbent upon the reader to be very circumspect when confronted with Cervantes' deliberately equivocal language, such as,

> En fin, en Carriazo vió el mundo un pícaro virtuoso, limpio, bien criado y más que medianamente discreto.
> (p. 224)

> ... se presentó a sus padres honrado y contento.
> (p. 228)

> No quiso Carriazo tenérsela encubierta, por no hacer agravio a la grande amistad que profesaban,
> (p. 229)

and so on to the penultimate paragraph,

> Desta manera quedaron todos contentos, alegres y satisfechos ... (p. 323)

referring to six people marrying, of whom only one is attaining his heart's desire.

The kind of trap the reader can fall into is represented on p. 294, where Cervantes invites his middle and upper class readers to share his contempt for the vulgo and approve the noble facets of Carriazo's character: "... pero como la mala bestia del vulgo, por la mayor parte, es mala, maldita y maldiciente, no tomó de memoria la liberalidad, brío y buenas partes del gran Lope, sino solamente la cola". There, the reader should remember that Carriazo's "liberalidad, brío y buenas partes" was somewhat qualified by his being surrounded by thugs who are not likely to let their profits walk away from under their noses, and that Carriazo has not only chosen a life amongst the vulgo, but has also acted like a thug therein; meanwhile, the reader himself is avidly reading a story about life amongst the vulgo. There is a similar trap on the next page, where Carriazo has decided to retire to another inn, "... y de estarse en ella hasta que la influencia de aquel mal planeta pasase, y se borrase de la memoria de los muchachos aquella demanda mala de la cola que le pedían." Again, there is an appeal to the reader's snobbery, this time

combined with the reassurance that that kind of unpleasantness really is just a run of bad luck; but the original "demanda mala de la cola" was Carriazo's ...

Constantly teased in this way by Cervantes, the reader has to be constantly on the watch for what Cervantes is making him swallow. He is even able to choose his attitude to the liberty which Cervantes describes, and which has such an effect on the plot of the story. The word itself, libertad, often seems, in practice, hopelessly ambiguous, serving as it so often does as a euphemism for licencia - the "licentia quam stulti libertatem vocant" about which Tacitus complained. As Professor Parker's comment, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, makes plain, that euphemistic use of the word is frequently applied to the picaresque life, and we find this at the beginning of La Ilustre Fregona. As mentioned earlier, Cervantes points to the ambiguity inherent in the use of the word by linking it with trabajo ("Allí campea la libertad y luce el trabajo," [p. 226]) and by remarking how the "vida libre" can result in capture by pirates (p. 227). That the real name of this picaresque liberty is licencia is clear enough, and Cervantes is, presumably, not just pointing out that that is the sort of mistake anyone can make - true though that be - but that the nature of the mistake has all the far-reaching ramifications already described: the word's

being made to impart a deceptive gloss to an unedifying business means that reality is being changed, in the eye of the beholder, by giving it another name. The word, far from enhancing reason's precision, serves only to confuse. The theoretically clear distinction between liberty, which is worthy and desirable, and license, which is perilous but also often desirable, can become unrecognisable in practice: instinct can be made to look like reason, and the misapplication of the words helps us to mistake the one for the other. The reader can choose his attitude to the libertad Cervantes mentions, just as he can to the whole of the story; the way he chooses will reveal whether he wants liberty or license - and since he is reading a story concerned more with the latter than the former, his choice seems fairly predictable.

The point about the reader's making a choice is that to do so is an exercise of his reason and a practical application of his natural liberty: as such, it reflects, as a speculum vitae should, an indication of the way in which he applies his natural liberty in real life. The reader thus cannot detach himself from the problems Cervantes is putting before him, in particular, the confusion of the reason brought about by the ambiguity of words, and our consequent propensity for avoiding contemplation of the moral consequences of our actions, with all the qualificationsof our natural liberty

that these factors entail.

The conversation between the two mozos de mulas at Illescas strongly suggests the impossibility of avoiding our responsibility as readers: they tell us that the law is being twisted and justice perverted in the province of Sevilla, but, once again, we are being offered a judgement that is conditioned by a viewpoint, a viewpoint that is hardly objective, but which complains because "barrida está Sevilla y diez leguas a la redonda de jácaros; no para ladrón en sus contornos; todos le temen como al fuego" (p. 237). But who are the "todos"? What about the people who are not sorry that Sevilla has been cleansed of its thieves and rogues? Those who fear the Conde de Puñonrostro may well be those who fear justice itself, while the "señores de la Audiencia" who are continually trying to obstruct the Conde may well be, if they are "padres de los miserables y amparo de los desdichados," highly inefficient and corrupt. If a corregidor can be "mal informado, o bien apasionado" (p. 238), then opinions held by ruffians about officers of the law are at least open to question, and the quality of the justice administered by the Conde may not be entirely unambiguous.

Now, the point I wish to emphasise here is that these references to the Conde, to his methods of enforcing the law, and to the hanging by him of a man named Genís, are all based

on fact.[8] The reader's judgement, therefore, is not, in this case, judgement on an inconsequential fiction, but a judgement on history, i.e., reality: the problems which beset natural liberty - ambiguity, words and reason, judgement and choice, and so on - are thus, briefly, brought into real life. By confronting us, all through the story, via the examples I have been discussing, with these deficiencies and potential deficiencies of our real liberty, the author makes us see the illusory nature of picaresque liberty in perspective, and he does so in a manner that is far more effective than mere condemnatory moralising could be.

2. Rinconete y Cortadillo.

I shall now briefly examine Rinconete y Cortadillo, to show that some of the problems discussed in connection with La Ilustre Fregona are not confined to the one story, and that the themes involved are not an invention of mine. The main problems of concern in both stories involve words and language, and their effect on reason (and therefore natural liberty) and understanding.

The thieves' cofradía (which is, in so many ways, a parody of human society) is shown, by Cervantes, to exist partly because its members deceive themselves so frequently

[8] v. footnote to line 8, p. 236, where Francisco Rodríguez Marín adduces the evidence for this.

with their own words and language, which they use, or misuse, in such a way as to appear to justify, and invite us to condone, their nefarious activities. Some obvious examples of that are the easy fallacies adduced by the mozo who first leads Rincón and Cortado to Monipodio's house. He tells the boys that he is a thief "'para servir a Dios y a las buenas gentes'", and, when Cortado expresses surprise, explains that "'... cada uno en su oficio puede alabar a Dios'" (pp. 158-9); the simple fallacy of accident - the misapplication of a general truth to a particular situation - is enough to ease the mozo's conscience.

A few moments later, the same effect is achieved by the ignoratio elenchi (I use the formal logical terms to emphasise that it is reason at stake here) of the mozo's question (which he intends rhetorically, although it is not, necessarily), "'¿No es peor ser hereje, o renegado, o matar a su padre o madre, o ser solomico?'" (p. 161). The other members of the cofradía are full of similar distortions of reason, such as the fallacy of accident invoked by Chiquiznaque, to explain his wounding of the servant instead of the master: "'Quien mal quiere a Beltrán, mal quiere a su can'" (p. 206).

Less obvious, and correspondingly more prejudicial to the individual's reasoning powers, is the confusion inherent in remarks such as Cortado's, "'Pero pues nuestra suerte ha

querido que entremos en esta cofradía, vuesa merced alargue el paso'" (p. 161); "nuestra suerte" conveniently ignores the fact that they are where they are from choice (a point I shall return to at the end).

All through the story, Cervantes shows the thieves as being trapped by these distortions of language and logic, which help to prevent their seeing or admitting the true nature of their behaviour. But the thieves' condition is only the background against which the reader must experience the difficulties, arranged by Cervantes, of the relationship between language and truth. Throughout the story, Cervantes is confronting us with the problem of words and meanings, and we have to examine the words in the text very closely if we are not to be caught out, for Cervantes is suggesting that the meanings may not always be what they appear. He shows us the problem in several different ways.

The first thing Cervantes does is offer us a string of puns in his description of the two boys. For example, one of them wears shoes that are "picados" (p. 134). As Marín's footnote tells us, "Zapatos picados eran ... 'los labrados con agujerillos o cortaduras sutiles ...'", such as might be worn by the well-to-do; here, the term means only that they are worn and full of holes. On the next page, we are told that Rincón (as it transpires) has a collar that is

"deshilado". Again the footnote is useful: "Como renglones atrás con lo picado de los zapatos, Cervantes juega ahora de las dos acepciones de la voz deshilado, según sea nombre o participio. En la primera significa 'cierta labor que se hace en las telas blancas de lienzo, sacando de ellas varios hilos y formando huecos o calados, que se labran después con la aguja'" (p. 135); but here, as before, the meaning is "worn".

In both the above examples, the meaning of "picados" and "deshilado" is perfectly obvious from the context: the two boys Cervantes is describing are scruffy urchins, and the author makes reference to more genteel attire only as a joke. There is no problem for the reader: such ambiguities attach to many of the words we use, and the meaning is almost invariably clarified by the context. But when the context does not provide such clarification, the problem becomes slightly less simple. For instance, in the next sentence (after "deshilado"), we are told that Rincón's playing-cards have become "de figura ovada, porque de ejercitarlos se les habían gastado las puntas, y porque durasen más, se las cercenaron y los dejaron de aquel talle" (p. 135). "Ejercitar" could mean, here, two slightly different things: it could either involve the idea of practice (as of swordsmanship, business, etc.), or the idea of training or drilling (as of an army - v. Diccionario de Autoridades). In the context

quoted, we cannot be sure which meaning we are to take, but whichever meaning we do take will put a different complexion on the owner of the cards: it is acceptable to practice (make a habit of) card-playing, but what kind of person "trains" or "drills" a pack of cards, and to what purpose?

Similarly, when we read, in the following sentence, that the boys had "uñas caireladas, y las manos no muy limpias" (p. 135), we cannot be sure whether the phrase is to be understood solely in its literal sense, or whether we should take account of the idiomatic connotation of uñas, which suggests (according to the Diccionario de Autoridades) an inclination to steal; the same connotation, offering us the same choice, also attaches to "las manos no muy limpias." In the case of both "ejercitar" and "uñas", and of "las manos no muy limpias," the context does not enable us to be certain of the meaning of the words. Soon, we find that, in both cases, either of the possible meanings are justified: the boys are card-sharpers and pickpockets, but the meaning we choose to see before we know that throws some light, not only on the fictional characters, but also on the reader himself.

Having thus reminded us of the inherent ambiguity of language, and shown us that it happens all the time, Cervantes then goes on to explore its more serious ramifications, as he begins to present the speech of his characters.

Cortado tells his life-story twice. The first time, he reveals that he is the son of a tailor who learned to be a tailor also, and that "... corro como una liebre, y salto como un gamo, y corto de tijera muy delicadamente," (pp. 136-7). The second time, he admits that his tailoring activities are mainly concerned with cutting holes in pockets - he is a cut-purse, and on the run from the authorities in Toledo. The first version of his life-story was, therefore, not the whole truth, yet neither was it a lie. The second version is more interesting, since, while it does not conceal unpleasant facts, neither does it present them in an unfavourable light: "vine a Toledo a ejercitar mi oficio, y en él he hecho maravillas" (p. 142) - an amusing way of saying that he went to steal where the pickings were good, without mentioning words like hurtar or robar; the facts are given a similar gloss by phrases such as "... ni hay faldriquera tan escondida, que mis dedos no visiten, ni mis tiseras no corten," (p. 142). His flight from justice is flippantly expressed as a lack of desire to "tratar con personas tan graves" (p. 142) as the Corregidor, while his poverty is explained by his having to leave Toledo "con tanta priesa, que no tuve lugar de acomodarme de cabalgaduras ni blancas, ni de algún coche de retorno, o, por lo menos, de un carro" (p. 142).

The words, it seems, can make the truth more palatable

than it really is, and Rincón indulges in the same kind of rhetoric, as, avoiding all words directly meaning theft or punishment or poverty or cheating, he tells a story of all those things, "Yo, señor hidalgo ..." (pp. 138-141). The boys talk like gentlemen, pretend to be merchants, and finally admit they are crooks, but the difference between each station appears as only a matter of terminology; the reader is thereby shown how the use (or abuse) of language can present several different perspectives of the one situation. We see the boys as they really are, and hear them pretend to be other things (well-born, down-on-their-luck, devil-may-care types), but, until they themselves confess it, we do not know where the truth lies. This power of words to distort and confuse, introduced at the beginning of the story, becomes the very stuff of the story, and the reader's difficulties are multiplied by Cervantes' games with germanía.

Cervantes sprinkles germanía terms throughout the story, and only very occasionally does he tell us that he is using germanía, or what a particular term means. The first admitted usage of germanía comes on pages 155-158, where the mozo accosts them and offers to lead them to Monipodio's hideout: "Y así, les fué diciendo y declarando otros nombres de los que ellos llaman germanescos o de la germanía ..." (p. 158). However, the reader must realise that, within the

fiction, Rincón and Cortado are lying when they profess incomprehension at the mozo's slang ("'... que así entendemos esos nombres como volar'" [p. 158]etc.), for they were already employing germanía terms in their first conversation at the beginning of the story. On p. 142, Cortado tells Rincón how "en cuatro meses que estuve en aquella ciudad, nunca fuí cogido entre puertas, ... ni soplado de ningún cañuto," and, as Marín's footnote explains, "Soplar, en lenguaje de germanía, vale denunciar; y cañuto soplón." Fair enough - if the boys are thieves, we should expect them to know some thieves' slang; but there are other implications. If all germanía terms were as easily recognisable, or guessable, as cañuto, soplón, and the mozo's words and phrases (entrevar, murcio, finibusterrae, etc., [pp. 156-7]), the reader would have little difficulty in sorting out the meanings of Cervantes' words; but many germanía terms are perfectly innocuous everyday words which have a special meaning only to the thieves and others who use it, and that adds a further complication to the story.

If Cortado is using such germanía terms as cañuto and soplón in his first conversation with Rincón, what are we to make of the more apparently straightforward parts of his life-stories? Since he is a thief right from the beginning of the story, it follows that he might be using germanía, if

not all, at least some of the time. He tells Rincón that "mi tierra no es mía, pues no tengo en ella más de un padre que no me tiene por hijo y una madrastra que me tiene por alnado" (p. 136), from which a reader might infer only that Cortado has come from an unhappy home. But, in germanía, padre can mean "padre de mancebía," and madrastra can mean "cadena, o cárcel";[9] that is to say, Cortado may be telling anyone who knows germanía that the only father he ever knew was a brothel-keeper - which would probably mean he is the son of a whore, which would explain why his padre "no me tiene por hijo" - and that he has already spent some time in prison, which would explain his ill-treatment and why he is persona non grata in his homeland. On the next page, we learn that Cortado's father is a "sastre y calcetero"; all right, he is not a brothel-keeper, but calcetero in germanía can mean "el que echa los grillos": which is it here? After all, Cortado's references to his own tailoring skills ("'corto de tijera muy delicadamente'" [p. 136]) may, in turn, convey the germanía meaning of tiseras, "Los dos dedos mayores de la mano," with its implications of picking pockets, so what can we believe about his father? In none of these instances can

[9] v. Juan Hidalgo's Bocabulario de Germanía; unless otherwise stated, all germanía meanings mentioned in this section are taken from that work.

we be certain that we know what is meant.

It seems, then, that the germanía used by Cervantes' thieves may be obvious some of the time, but not all of the time. Thus, while we can immediately pick out such slang terms as Monipodio's use of flores to mean "card-tricks" (p. 171), the muchacho's "gurullada" (p. 175), Monipodio's "piar el turco puro" (p. 174), and so on, we can never be sure how to take some of the more ordinary-looking phrases. Rincón, about to explain himself to Cortado, says, "pienso que habemos de ser, déste hasta el último día de nuestra vida, verdaderos amigos" (p. 138) - a very chummy remark, but, in germanía, amigos can mean "dineros": how does that condition Rincón's words, especially as he proceeds to teach Cortado card-sharping, so that they can make a quick killing? The mozo enquires of the two boys, "'¿cómo no han ido a la aduana del señor Monipodio?'" (p. 156), and Rincón assumes (or pretends to assume) that he is talking about a tax-office; but, in germanía, aduana means "mancebía", and the mozo admits that it is not a tax-office: "-Si no se paga ... a lo menos, registránse ante el señor Monipodio, que es su padre [my underlining], su maestro y su amparo" (p. 156); - what exactly could he mean here? Later, we learn that the whole cofradía is dependent upon the earnings of prostitutes.

The consequence of all that is that, whenever we

read the direct speech of the thieves, we cannot feel that we know exactly what is being said. Even if we were fully conversant with germanía (i.e., if we were also thieves!), we could not feel any sense of certainty, because, for one thing, the ambiguity remains whether we realise it or not, and, for another, Cervantes has set yet more traps for us.

Discussing La Ilustre Fregona, I made mention of the oft-assumed connection between words and their referents. In a simple way, that connection is reflected in the names of some of the members of the cofradía (Gananciosa, Cariharta, Maniferro, etc.). We have seen how the thieves are incapable of handling ordinary language, but we may feel that they ought to be able to handle their own jargon (germanía) without too much confusion, and, therefore, that such germanía terms as we recognise are being used accurately by the thieves. But let us examine what happens when Monipodio (described by the mozo as "'calificado, hábil y suficiente'" [p. 157]) bestows a name on someone:

> -Pues de aquí adelante -respondió Monipodio- quiero y es mi voluntad que vos, Rincón, os llaméis Rinconete, y vos, Cortado, Cortadillo, que son nombres que asientan como de molde a vuestra edad y a nuestras ordenanzas. (pp. 167-8)

The curious aspect of that statement is that, if the given names do fit "vuestra edad y a nuestras ordenanzas," they do not fit, quite so precisely, the boys' professions: in germanía

the word cortadillo means "una flor que usan los fulleros en el naipe" (a trick used by card-sharpers). Of the two boys, it is Rincón who is the expert card-sharper, Cortado being the cut-purse. It is true that, in ordinary language, Cortadillo might be an appropriate nickname for Cortado, but, since cortadillo is a germanía word, it is surprising that Monipodio does not take its slang meaning into account. Later, we find that this muddling of germanía nicknames is reflected by Monipodio's muddling of Cortado's ordinary agnomen, "el Bueno" (bestowed upon him by Monipodio, p. 177): on p. 212, Monipodio suddenly refers to "Rinconete el Bueno"!

What Cervantes seems to be doing is making us feel that, even if we spot the germanía spoken by the thieves, and even if we are on the watch for the ambiguity of slang mixed with proper usage, we still cannot be certain of any meanings, because even the thieves sometimes seem to be uncertain of the import of their own jargon.

If the germanía in the story were confined to the conversation of the thieves, then we might at least feel that the complications stemming from the germanía could only arise when the thieves were speaking. There are however, indications that that is not necessarily the case. On p. 189, Cariharta has just told everyone about her beating from Repolido, and is screeching for justice: "aquí volvió a pedir justicia, y

aquí se la prometió de nuevo Monipodio, y todos los bravos que allí estaban." What does Cervantes mean here by the word "bravos"? He could be deliberately mixing the ideas of valour and savagery: we know that "todos los bravos" in the scene described are thugs who profess gallantry. But there is also the possibility that the germanía element is again present: the germanía meaning of bravo is "juez". These bravos are all promising Cariharta justice, and we have already seen the same gang in a parody of a law-court, where the mozo is falsely accused of not declaring the stolen purse, and everyone gets angry, "viendo que se rompían sus estatutos y buenas ordenanzas" (p. 176).

If Cervantes has slipped in a germanía pun in the above instance, the implications are considerable, for the word "bravos" is not part of a thief's conversation, but part of the narrative prose: what that means, then, is that hidden germanía meanings are not confined to the thieves' dialogue, but may occur at any place in the text! And, if we cannot be sure of the meanings of the thieves' dialogue, because of the possibility of germanía, our situation now is that we cannot be certain that we properly understand any part at all of the whole story. What, for instance, is meant by this section of narrative: "informáronse de uno dellos qué oficio era aquél, y si era de mucho trabajo, y de qué ganancia"

(p. 147)? Cervantes is describing the boys' enquiries about a job, but trabajar, in germanía, means "hurtar", and the boys' interest in work extends only to how much they can filch (as is shown in the next paragraph in the story). Here, the passage quoted is reported speech, which serves to increase our difficulties, as we cannot be sure whether the choice of word should be attributed to the reporter or to the speaker.

I began this section of the chapter with the reminder that the thieves in the cofradía are trapped by their own confused language, which effectively prevents them from seeing the truth behind their behaviour and their rhetoric. As he reads the story, though, the reader may come to realise that he is in the same boat as the criminals, his difficulties of understanding having been made, by Cervantes, to reflect theirs. Either we do not notice the tricks the author is playing, in which case we fail to grasp the full meaning of the words and thus appear to be no more intelligent than the criminals, and to be as easily convinced; or we do see what is going on, and have to admit that the only difference between ourselves and the fictional criminals is that they do not realise their own condition (while we also have to explain how it is that we know so much thieves' slang!).

We may, accordingly, begin to appreciate Cervantes' joke in setting the scene of his tale in Sevilla, for that

city was known in germanía as "Babilonia", and Babylon was where men built the tower which prompted God to "go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (Gen. XI, v. 7). In Rinconete y Cortadillo Cervantes presents several different levels of language - ordinary language (presumably!), obvious Castilian puns, less obvious Castilian puns, germanía, germanía puns, fallacious rhetoric, and so on - through which the reader must try to pick his way, and via which he must eventually conclude that language simply does not allow the understanding any certainty, but is, in fact, a barrier between men and reality which must inevitably distort truth to a greater or lesser degree.

Confirmation of the reader's situation, relative to the story, comes in the final paragraph, "Era Rinconete ..." (pp. 216-218). The reader, having been shown the events of the story via the experiences of Rinconete, is told that Rinconete had a good laugh thinking back on the inanities he had witnessed in his first day in the cofradía, and there is a recapitulation of all the things that amused Rinconete, which doubtless caused the reader similar amusement. No doubt the reader is flattered and reassured by Rinconete's amusement, because "Era Rinconete, aunque muchacho, de muy buen entendimiento, y tenía un buen natural," as we are told

at the beginning of the paragraph (p. 216). But we learned at the beginning of the story that Rinconete is not really all that bright: his "talents" are taught to Cortado in a few minutes (p. 143), he does not draw the simple lesson he might from his glimpse of the galleys in the harbour (p. 147), and he shares in the linguistic self-deception of the thieves without realising it. At the end, when we have finished chuckling with Rinconete about the cofradía's antics, we find that he "propuso en sí de aconsejar a su compañero no durasen mucho en aquella vida tan perdida y tan mala, tan inquieta, y tan libre y disoluta" (p. 218), which would seem eminently sensible, except that "Pero, con todo esto, llevado de sus pocos años y su poca experiencia, pasó con ella adelante algunos meses ..." (p. 218). Having begun the paragraph by telling us that Rinconete was a smart lad in spite of his youth, Cervantes ends it by telling us that Rinconete's consequent folly was attributable to his youth! In the meantime, the reader has happily shared Rinconete's view of past events. ... Cervantes then promises us further stories about Rinconete and the cofradía: "... se deja para otra ocasión contar su vida y milagros, con los de su maestro Monipodio, y otros sucesos de aquéllos de la infame academia" (p. 218), thereby suggesting that he knows that we, just like Rinconete, want to have more fun with the cofradía (as, if we have read this far,

we must).

The connection between reader, Rinconete, and, hence, the cofradía, having been thus clearly established, Cervantes goes on to mention the word ejemplo: "que todos serán de grande consideración y que podrán servir de ejemplo y aviso a los que los leyeren" (p. 218). Does that mean there has been no ejemplo in the story we have just read? The exemplary further instalments promised by Cervantes never materialise - why? Because they do not need to; the very fact that we have read Rinconete y Cortadillo means that we have undergone - whether we were aware of it or not - exactly the same experience that we have to undergo in real life, of being confronted with the necessity of trying to ascertain where the truth lies through the distortions and deceptions of language. Therein, I submit, lies the ejemplo.

There is much more to be said about this novela, but my purpose in discussing it was only to show that certain aspects of La Ilustre Fregona which I was exploring in the first section of this chapter, namely, Cervantes' demonstration of some of the relationships between language, reason and reality, and his deliberate involvement of the reader, are not confined to the one story. Further discussion of Rinconete y Cortadillo would be a digression from my theme,

and must therefore be postponed. I shall conclude with one or two observations concerning the problem of liberty in Rinconete y Cortadillo, to show how the principles I have already outlined may be seen at work.

Rinconete thinks of the criminal life in terms of "aquella vida ... tan libre" (p. 218). The word libre is here being used pejoratively, and rightly so, for the liberty of the criminal's life is as false a liberty as that of the picaresque life of Avendaño and Carriazo. As Cervantes makes clear, the criminal life is a consequence of deliberate wrong choice, which is the denial of natural liberty; I refer here to the incident already mentioned in which Rincón and Cortado, on their arrival in Sevilla, go sightseeing, and are sobered by the presence of six galleys, crewed by condemned criminals such as they will one day surely be (p. 147). It is in spite of that visual warning, and in the clear knowledge of where their life will lead them (prison, galleys or death), that they choose to continue their criminal life, excusing it by such phrases as "nuestra suerte ha querido que entremos en esta cofradía ..." (p. 161). Simple phraseology and word-choice thus confuse their reason to the extent that they cannot sensibly use their natural liberty, i.e., they cannot see how to choose a proper course of action. The same effects may be seen in their opening conversation, where jocular turns of

phrase conceal the poverty and sordidity which reason would suggest they try to avoid. The members of the cofradía destroy their natural liberty in a similar way, seen at its most ludicrous in the words of Cariharta: "que el trabajo y afán con que yo los [veinticuatro reales] había ganado, ruego yo a los cielos que vayan en descuento de mis pecados" (p. 188); as a prostitute, of course, her trabajo and her pecados are one and the same thing, but the conventional form of her words encourages a blurring of her reason, so that she cannot see that her trabajo - ordinarily a manifestation of liberty - is a denial of her liberty.

The members of the cofradía also sacrifice their liberty in rendering obedience to Monipodio, himself unable to speak or reason properly, and the perversion of liberty represented by the cofradía is reflected in their idea of justice. The motto of the old lady, Pipota, is "Dios ... nos libre a todos de poder de justicia" (p. 181), also expressed as "Él nos libre y conserve en nuestro trato peligroso sin sobresaltos de justicia" (p. 184); that, though, is a complete contradiction in terms, for liberty consists in obedience to law and justice, not in evasion of it, so that it would make no sense for God to "free" them from it. The practical application of justice in the cofradía is equally meaningless: we are told of a sort of kangaroo court

when the mozo is accused of stealing the purse that Cortado stole, and everyone is incensed, "viendo que se rompían sus estatutos y buenas ordenanzas" (p. 176); unfortunately, their statutes and covenants do not include procedures for establishing the guilt or innocence of an accused party! Later, there is another example of Monipodio's justice, the justice he promises la Gananciosa: "aquí estoy yo, que te haré justicia", (p. 186). He tells her that, as regards Repolido, "que no ha de entrar por estas puertas el cobarde envesado si primero no hace una manifiesta penitencia del cometido delito" (p. 190). A few minutes later, Repolido comes banging on the door, and, as Cariharta yells "-No le abra vuesa merced, señor Monipodio ...", Monipodio immediately opens the door!

I need hardly add that, just as the above extracts represent a comic perversion of justice, so too must they represent the denial and antithesis of liberty. Such descriptions might be considered gratuitous if Cervantes were merely poking fun at a community which he himself had invented, but we have to remember that he has shown us the connection between ourselves and the criminals. In the same way that the law on which society depends is shown in the story, to be fallible (because of corrupt policemen, silly mule-drivers, shady gallants, and so on), the individual's

dependence on reason and language, and, with it, his natural liberty, is shown to be equally fallible.

Afterword

I offer an Afterword rather than Conclusions, because, as is indicated in my Foreword, the nature of this thesis renders inappropriate the provision of specific conclusions; the work itself is, in effect, a series of conclusions, in that it deals with the literary works on an individual basis. There are, however, a few final comments which are pertinent in a more general vein.

Obviously, I hope I have shown that there is an approach to the concept of liberty in the Spanish history and literature of the Golden Age which is more suitable than that hitherto apparent in modern critical studies of the period.

For example, I think that Part I, above, goes some small way towards resolving the puzzle reflected in the last sentence of the following statement:

> The reassertion of royal authority in the spheres of administration and justice necessarily involved some loss of liberty for the subjects of the Crown. But, after long years of civil strife, this was a price that the majority of them were willing enough to pay. According to the great chronicler Hernando del Pulgar, their wish was 'to escape from lordship into the royal liberty [libertad real],' and they saw no incompatibility between freedom and a greater degree of subservience to royal power.[1]

[1] J. H. Elliott, Imperial Spain 1469-1716, (Pelican, 1970), p. 98.

My reading of the theoretical background suggests that there is no reason why the subjects referred to should have seen any such incompatibility as that implied in the passage quoted.

Part II, above, goes on to explain how we might avoid some of the terminological pitfalls which can beset our interpretation of Golden Age literature, such as those apparent in the discussion on liberty in La Vida es Sueño which ensued from R. D. F. Pring-Mill's lecture at the 1969 Exeter conference on Calderón.[2] That, of course, is another way of stressing what others have already stressed, namely, the necessity to see or read the works through seventeenth-century eyes; my particular aim has been to show how carefully we should handle the word "liberty".

A second general point, arising from the analyses of Part II, concerns the problem of picking out and encapsulating specific themes, concepts, ideas, beliefs and so on as part of Golden Age criticism. Clearly, a danger of distortion attaches thereto, in that individual theories and concepts are so often inseparable from other theories and concepts. As we have seen, a discussion of liberty leads us into problems of law, justice, tyranny, reason, language and so forth, and I have been - necessarily - as much concerned with pointing

[2] v. "La victoria del hado en La Vida es Sueño", p. 70, footnote 45, in Hacia Calderón, pp. 53-70.

to these connections as with illustrating the concept of liberty itself. That is why I have had to devote considerable space to outlining the associated themes with which the discussions of liberty become entwined. Among other things, we had to examine, in Fuenteovejuna, problems of tyranny; in El Mejor Alcalde, el Rey and El Alcalde de Zalamea, problems of justice; in La Vida es Sueño, problems of reason and instinct; in La Ilustre Fregona, problems of language; while, in all of them, there are elements of all the problems named. Even so, it must be admitted that I have had to impose artificial limits on the various lines of enquiry, if only to keep within manageable distance of the central theme. Ideally, each work should be analysed in its entirety.

That leads to a final general point, already widely accepted, which I hope I have further illustrated, viz., that the more we dig into the works of Lope, Calderón, Cervantes and others of equal stature, the more complexities and difficulties we find. Obviously, there is much more to be done, even concerning the best-known works, as I remarked in my Foreword, and nothing is more certain than that my own findings on liberty will have to be modified when further research is done into the associated problems.

Appendix I

A contemporary record of the affair, attributed to Luis Cabrera de Córdoba,[1] tells us that when Antonio Pérez was arrested by the Inquisition in Zaragoza, in May 1591, his friends organised a riot, supported by "otra gente popular, ... apellidando con grandes voces '¡Libertad!'"[2] When the mob increased in size, "volvieron con mayor furia a la casa del Marqués, apellidando '¡Libertad y resistencia!'"[3] and, after more demonstrations punctuated by cries of "¡Libertad!", the instigators got their way, and Pérez was removed from the Inquisition prison (subject to Royal justice) to the civil prison (subject to Aragonese justice, and thus favourable to Pérez, himself Aragonese), accompanied by "el vulgo, con muestras de alegría y tal sosiego como si no hubiera pasado

[1] Historia de Felipe II°, Rey de España, (Madrid, 1877), Vol. III, capítulo adicional. This record of the Pérez affair was not published with the original Historia, but is reproduced from a manuscript in the Real Academia de Historia, Madrid, attributed to Cabrera, entitled Istoria de Cabrera MS parte 2.

[2] Ibid., p. 551.

[3] Ibid., p. 551.

el alboroto, pareciéndoles quedaban con aquello salvas sus libertades".[4]

The liberties being defended by the Aragonese in this case concern the privileges of the nobles, the autonomy of the Aragonese legal and judicial system, and other checks to the power of the Castilian Crown which the latter had been trying to eradicate for at least a century.[5] The liberty involved, then, is of the legal kind,[6] not the natural or moral liberty which the theorists regard as the most important kind, and when Cabrera describes another riot, saying "estando ya hecha señora la que su indiscreción llamaba libertad ...",[7] he seems to illustrate the kind of phenomenon to which Fajardo refers. Certainly Philip II recognised the problem, and took steps to prevent its re-occurrence in the new charter of 1592, one of whose acts, entitled "De la pena de los sediciosos," begins:

> El apellidar libertad en este Reyno, y incitar a que se hiziesse, sin poder, ni dever hazerlo, ha traydo muchos inconvenientes.... Deseando su

[4] Ibid., p. 554.

[5] v. J. H. Elliott, Imperial Spain 1469-1716, (Pelican, 1970), and other historical accounts of the situation.

[6] The Diccionario de Autoridades notes that the word apellidar was, in Aragón, a judicial term, meaning "invocar el favor del Juez en un pedimento," and describes it as a "Voz curial antigua de Aragón."

[7] Ibid., p. 569

Majestad evitar esto, ... estatuye y ordena, que qualquiera persona, de qualquier dignidad, estado, o condición que sea, que apellidare libertad, o induziere a otros, que la apelliden, aunque del averlo hecho no se siga otro efecto; puedan ser castigados, condenados hasta en pena de muerte natural inclusivamente, a arbitrio del juez.[8]

[8] Fueros y Actos de Corte del Reyno de Aragón, Hechos en las cortes por la cathólica y real Majestad del Rey Don Phelipe nuestro Señor: celebrados en la ciudad de Tarazona, el año MDXCII. (Zaragoza, 1667).

Appendix II

The most important of these documents, because they were the result of the deliberations of theologians and politicians trying to set standards, were the Leyes de Burgos (1513) and the Leyes Nuevas (1542), although there were hundreds of others.[1] The group convened in December 1512, led by some Dominicans under Alonso de Montesinos, devised the Leyes de Burgos which were promulgated at Valladolid on 23rd February, 1513, as "Las Ordenanzas para el tratamiento de los Indios," and whose designed effects may be summarised as follows:

ley 1a.): giving the Indians property rights;

ley 2a.): safeguarding them from injury when being transported;

leyes 3a.-10a., 12, 16, 17): offering them the theory and practice of Roman Catholicism;

ley 11a.): protecting them from being overloaded with baskets, etc.;

[1] v. Colección de Documentos para la Historia de la Formación Social de Hispano-América, 1493-1810, compiled by Richard Konetzke, (Madrid [CSIC], 1953).

ley 13, 14): allowing them rest after a season in the mines, as well as on Sundays and fiestas;

ley 15): ensuring that they be properly fed;

ley 18): protecting pregnant women and young mothers;

ley 19, 20): provision of decent bedding and clothing;

ley 24): the forbidding of corporal punishment or verbal insult against the Indians.

The remaining laws dealt with sundry administrative problems.[2]

In the second paragraph of the Leyes Nuevas, issued in Barcelona on 20th November, 1542, there is presented the following statement which explains the relevance of these laws:

> Y porque nuestro principal intento y voluntad siempre ha sido y es la conservación y aumento de los indios y que sean instruídos y enseñados en las cosas de nuestra santa fe católica y bien tratados como personas libres y vasallos nuestros como lo son, encargamos y mandamos a los del dicho nuestro Consejo tengan siempre muy gran atención y especial cuidado sobre todo de la conservación y buen gobierno de los dichos indios.

The third paragraph reiterates the point:

> Item, ordenamos y mandamos que de aquí adelante por ninguna causa ... no se pueda hacer esclavo indio alguno y queremos sean tratados como vasallos nuestros de la corona de Castilla, pues lo son.[3]

Among the other Reales Cédulas sent during the 16th century were examples such as these: "Real Cédula para que los

[2] v. Konetzke, op. cit., Vol. 1, Doc. 25.

[3] Ibid., Doc. 144.

indios no se echen en las minas" (Granada, Dec. 8, 1526).[4]
"Real Provisión sobre la libertad de los indios" (Toledo, Dec. 1, 1525).[5]
"Real Cédula que los indios naturales como personas libres sirvan y vivan con quien quisieren" (Madrid, Nov. 8, 1539).[6]
"Real Provisión para que los indios vivan donde quisieran, y se puedan pasar de unos pueblos a otros" (Valladolid, Feb. 13, 1544).[7]
"Real Cédula para que los indios tengan libertad para hacer de sí lo que quisieren" (Madrid, Nov. 11, 1566).[8]
"Real Cédula para que los indios de la Nueva España no reciban agravios" (Tomar, May 1, 1581),[9]
and so on.

From these laws and letters we may infer the Crown's acknowledgement of the necessity, to a free man, of propitious external circumstances, in both the general sense (partially alleviating life's misery), and the particular sense (safeguarding specific areas of choice).

[4] Ibid., Doc. 48.
[5] Ibid., Doc. 39.
[6] Ibid., Doc. 119.
[7] Ibid., Doc. 149.
[8] Ibid., Doc. 288.
[9] Ibid., Doc. 399.

Appendix III

It is difficult to arrive at an unequivocal definition of the Spanish conception of libertad de conciencia; its meaning depends on the user's meaning of libertad and of conciencia, as well as on his impression of it as derived from information concerning its practice. For Saavedra Fajardo it means the permitting of differing religions and beliefs in the state, giving rise to disunity among the people, "de donde nacerán las sediciones y conspiraciones, y dellas las mudanzas de repúblicas y dominios,"[1] so that ultimately "la ruina del Estado es la libertad de conciencia ... luego que entró en los Paises Bajos la diversidad de religiones, faltaron a la obediencia de su Príncipe natural."[2] The nub of the problem in the political context is, that if civil law is binding in the conscience for raison d'état as well as for theological reasons,[3] and if the body politic is

[1] Idea de un Príncipe Político Christiano, Empresa XXIV, para. 1.

[2] Ibid., Empresa LX, para. 4.

[3] cf. Suárez on the matter: "gubernatio sine potestate cogendi inefficax est, & facile contemnitur: coactio autem sine potestate obligandi in conscientia, vel est moraliter impossibilis, quia coactio iusta supposit culpam, quod est

governed according to the principles of law as stated in Church doctrine, then the privilege of the conciencia to choose which framework of laws it will accept means that it is able to choose which laws it will obey; the likely result is that, if law is no longer able to bind in conscience, or to bind everyone in conscience, civil disobedience will ensue. That much is implicit in the events related in a letter written in 1623 by Andrés de Almansa y Mendoza, a noble at the Spanish court, who relates:

> Los católicos del reino de Irlanda dieron memorial a su Majestad, suplicando que, pues, por ensalzar la fe y bien de los católicos de los reinos de Gran Bretaña, se tratase el casamiento de la Serenísima Infanta María con el príncipe de Inglaterra.... Y una de las principales mercedes que se les habían de hacer, era capitular que en el reino de Irlanda se diese libertad de conciencia, y que todos los que estaban ausentes de aquel reino por su fe y parcialidad española, se les volviesen sus haciendas y fuesen dados por buenos y leales vasallos. [My underlining][4]

The supplicants, then, are affirming that libertad de conciencia will not bring about any kind of disloyalty on their part.

Another danger of libertad de conciencia concerns some of the philosophical problems already noted in connection

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valde probabile, ut magis declarabitur in seq. & tractando de lege poenali, vel certe est valde insufficiens, quia per eam non posset in multis casibus necessarijs sufficienter reipublicae subvenire." De Legibus, Liber III, Caput XXI, para. 8.

[4] Novedades de esta Corte y avisos recibidos de otras partes, 1621-1626, (Madrid, 1886), letter dated March 12, 1623.

with natural liberty, and in fact concerns man's very soul and chance of salvation. Rivadeneyra makes the point: "la libertad de creer lo que un hombre quiere es muy perjudicial y dañosa, porque es libertad para errar, y errar en una cosa peligrosísima; porque, como la fe verdadera no puede ser sino una, como dijimos, todo lo que discrepa y desvía della es engaño, ceguedad y error."[5] Regarding that, we are again confronted with the problem of knowledge, knowledge which is essential for the proper use of natural liberty, the development of prudence, and the acquisition of the habit of virtue (the approach to moral liberty). Choosing the wrong faith means jeopardising the possibility of grasping reason and truth, and hence denying one's natural liberty and, ultimately, one's chance of salvation. Thus Covarrubias' dictionary (1674 edition) defines the concept in this way: "La libertad que buscan los Heriges de nuestros tiempos, y llaman libertad de conciencia, es servidumbre del alma, y licencia."[6]

There were, as I have said, other meanings attached to libertad de conciencia - Barrionuevo, for example, uses it in reference to the freedom to preach the religion of one's

[5] Tratado de la Religión, Libro I, Cap. 18, pp. 114-5.

[6] v. under heading LIBERTAD. This entry re. libertad de conciencia does not appear in the 1611 edition.

choice[7] - but the above-mentioned threats to social and spiritual disorder are seen to be the main dangers of the principle, dangers whose reality was very strongly reinforced by contemporary events in other European countries. Libertad de conciencia serves as a good example of a liberty which is false, a denial of liberty, therefore - "servidumbre del alma."

[7] "El pregón que se ha dado de la libertad de conciencia es singular. Dice mucho en pocas palabras. Todo Christiano puede libremente predicar el Evangelio como lo dictare su conciencia, sin que por esto caiga en pena alguna, y con todo eso se dice que hasta agora nadie se ha declarado, temiendo sea estratagema." D. Jerónimo Barrionuevo de Peralta, Los Avisos de Barrionuevo, "Escritores Castellanos," vols. XCV, XCVI, XCVII, Tomo II, (Madrid, 1892), Aviso dated May 15, 1655, referring to events in Cromwell's England.

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[1]Other works consulted will be known or familiar to those interested in the period under examination, comprising contemporary journalism and records, writings on theology, law, politics and statecraft, social mores, etc., and relevant modern studies in the fields of history, literature and language.

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